



Meeting attendance

In-Person (William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery, Anchorage, AK): Callie Gesmundo (USFWS), Janell Larsen Tempel (ADFG), Rick Lanctot (USFWS), Julie Hagelin (Fairbanks ADFG), Zak Pohlen (USFWS), Arin Underwood (ADFG), Colleen Handel (USGS), Dan Ruthrauff (USGS), Bob Gill (retired USGS), Katie Christie (ADFG), Tamara Zeller (USFWS), Tracey Gotthardt (ADFG), Danny Casner (UAF), Monica Wey (UAF).

Online: Jim Johnson (USFWS), Rozy Bathrick (PhD student), Lee Tibbitts (USGS), Lindsey Hermmans (Virginia tech), Mary Anne Bishop (PWS science center), Sarah Hoefpner (Iowa State), Aaron Yappert (Iowa State), Chris Harwood (Kanuti NWR USFWS), Rachel Richardson (USGS), David Payer (NPS), Cindy Mom (citizen scientist, Kachemak Bay monitoring), Amal Ajmi (Fairbanks USFWS), Claire Atkins (University of Hawaii), Brian Robinson (USGS), Kristine Sowl (USFWS), Becky Jones (USFS, BPIF), John Pearce (USGS), Gwen Baluss (USFS), Sarah Saalfeld (USFWS), Mary Hake (NPS), Bruce Seppi (BLM), Maureen de Zeeuw (BOEM), Caroline Van Hemert (USGS), Laura Farwell (Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture), Court Brown (Trent University), Hilary Cooke (WCS Canada), Audrey Taylor (previously UAA), Travis Booms (Fairbanks ADFG)

10:05-10:45 Species Focused Studies Updates

- **Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Rick Lanctot, Lee Tibbitts*)**
 - The Buff-breasted Sandpiper working group first meet at the first Western Hemisphere shorebird Group Meeting in Colorado in 2006. Since then, the group has met four other times with the most recent being at the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group meeting in 2022.
 - The group has expanded to include participants from many countries throughout the species breeding and non-breeding range.
 - Work being conducted by members of the working group includes tracking birds to understand routes and stopovers, as well as habitat use. Local studies of movements and habitat use exist in Texas, Canada, and Colombia.
 - During the last meeting, the group split into two breakout session: 1) tracking Buff-breasted Sandpiper movements, and 2) best land management practices. The group hopes to produce a book on grassland management practices for Buff-breasted Sandpiper and other shorebird species that rely on similar habitats.
 - Finally, the group is working towards a better estimate of species abundance. The current estimate is based on a survey done at a stopover site in Nebraska (56,000 birds), not all Buff-breasted Sandpipers stop in Nebraska. Surveys are now being

done in Texas (12-15,000 individual estimate by Jim Lyons). Paul Smith also analyzed PRIMS survey in Canada and come up with an estimate of 350,000+ individuals.

- **Lesser Yellowlegs (*Katie Christie, Jim Johnson*)**
 - Lesser Yellowlegs have received quite a bit of attention over the past year and have been listed as a high urgency species for the Road to Recovery initiative. They are one of four pilot species for the initiative.
 - A new working groups was established, and the first meeting was held during the 2022 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Grip meeting. Some project funding has been provided by the Knobloch Foundation.
 - Studies of Lesser Yellowlegs have been going on for a while including a demography study in Anchorage, AK during the late 90s, a migration study of breeding birds in Alaska and Canada to help identify threats, a comparative demography study in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, an examination of neonicotinoids presence in Lesser Yellowlegs and other shorebirds within the Prairie Pothole region, and an assessment of Lesser Yellowlegs “hot spots” in the Argentine Pampas.
- **Red Knot (*Jenell Larsen-Tempel, Jim Johnson*)**
 - There has been an ongoing study of Red Knot population structure based on the tracking of the *roselaari* subspecies of Red Knot tracked from Grays Harbor, Washington. Three distinct breeding populations have been identified, 1) Wrangel Island, Russia, 2) Northwest Alaska and 3) Seward Peninsula, Alaska.
 - In Grays Harbor, Washington, biologists are developing a population estimate for *roselaari* Red Knots using the methods developed by Jim Lyons. According to this method, the global population estimate for this subspecies is 21,500 individuals.
 - The current knowledge gap in the *roselaari* subspecies is the understanding of where the species overwinters. New efforts to track the birds during winter is currently in the works.
 - A study of Red Knot vital rates began in Nome, Alaska in 2022 and will continue through 2024.
 - Janell Larsen-Tempel initiated a study of *roselaari* Red Knots abundance in Controller Bay, Alaska. The pilot season in 2022 included 15 scientists and 3 camps. The goal is to determine what percentage of the *roselaari* population uses Controller Bay as a stopover using Jim Lyons methods. The initial estimate is about 30% of the population.
 - A diet study in Controller Bay was conducted by the results were inconclusive because the primers did not work.
 - Next year the crew will include a dedicated photographer who will take picture of Red Knot legs flags.

- **Bar-tailed Godwit (*Dan Ruthrauff, Jim Johnson*)**
 - There isn't a Bar-tailed Godwit working group, but people there are many people in Alaska, New Zealand, Australia, and Asia that work on this species.
 - Aerial surveys of Godwits were flown in 2017/2018 in western Alaska, and it was determined that all Bar-tailed Godwits stage at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
 - An on-the-ground survey in New Zealand produced an estimate of 123,000 birds which aligns with the population estimates from Alaska.
 - This summer scientists traveled to Nome to study Bar-tailed Godwit demography, as well as track chick/juvenile migration and determine chick survival. One of the tagged chicks migrated all the way to Tasmania in 2022. The PR from this discovery was immense and multiple news outlets picked up the story.
- **Upland Sandpiper (*Jim Johnson, Callie Gesmundo*)**
 - The Upland Sandpiper is widely distributed across grasslands but is largely unstudied in Alaska.
 - In 2021, PTT tags were attached to birds in Delta Junction to identify migratory routes. Tracked birds followed a narrow corridor through Canada and the U.S. and jumps across the Gulf of Mexico.
 - In 2022, the study expanded to Canada and Maine to look at subpopulation movements. Preliminary data suggest that western Canada and U.S. subpopulations follow similar migratory routes to Alaska and subpopulations in eastern Canada and Maine followed the Atlantic Flyway.
 - Upland Sandpipers are hunted in South America and the tracking study will help identify areas where management actions can be focused. A graduate student at University Guelph will be starting work soon.
- **Dunlin (*Sarah Hoepfner, Rick Lanctot*)**
 - Sarah Hoepfner has been remotely monitoring Dunlin at Utqiagvik as part of her masters research. She deployed tags on breeding adults that collect location data every 15 minutes. The data provides information on male and female movements during breeding, egg laying, and incubation. Nest survival is a function of distance from nest and distance from nest can also help determine movement between nesting attempts. The preliminary results on the comparison of human monitored and remote monitored nest survival suggest that nest success is high for remotely monitored nests.
 - *Arcticola* Dunlin surveys in Asia, show a much lower adult survival rates than other locations. Lindsey Hermann's masters research has determined adult survival from band resights in non-breeding area. The latest estimate of adult survival is a bit higher than past estimates. Breeding conditions (e.g., snow melt) can affect adult survival at breeding sites.
- **Red Phalarope (*Sarah Saalfeld*)**

- A tracking study has been initiated using 2-gram solar powered Argos PTT tags. Population of Red Phalarope may be declining and during the non-breeding periods they act like seabirds. The goal was to determine migration routes, stopover sites, and areas of concentrated use in Alaska and Canada. Results will soon be available as a publication in Marine Ecology Progress Series.
- Preliminary results suggest that Red Phalarope are dispersive and do not use narrow corridors during migration. Some birds have even been shown to back-track in their movements and use highly productive areas with upwellings. Movements appear to be related to ocean temperatures, salinity and chlorophyll.
- **Shorebird migration study (*Rozy Bathrick*)**
 - In 2022 began a study to examine movements of shorebirds from breeding locations within or near Long-Range Radar Sites. Fall migration routes will be analyzed for Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitcher, and Pacific and American Golden-Plovers.
 - Preliminary results show that Short-billed Dowitcher migrating from King Salmon had departure dates similar to the birds migrating from Beluga, Alaska, however, arrival dates at non-breeding sites differed.
 - Preliminary results also show that American Golden-Plover breeding in western Alaska migrate across the Arctic and use the Atlantic Flyway.
 - Rozy is currently looking for more locations near Long Range Radar Sites to capture and track birds.
- **Black Oystercatchers (*Brian Robinson*)**
 - Black Oystercatchers have the smallest population of any shorebird in Alaska (11,000 individuals). The Gulf Watch program monitors this species density, productivity, diet, and hatch dates.
 - Preliminary results from long-term monitoring indicates that Black Oystercatcher densities were not affected by the marine heatwave and population appear stable.
 - A tracking study conducted by graduate students at Simon Fraser University shows that the species is a partial migrant, and some individuals are long-distance migrant, and some are short-distance migrants. Also, heavy bodied birds are more likely to migrate long distances than lighter bodied birds.

10:45-11:15 ASG/BPIF Outreach Group

- **ABOG mission (*Casey Burns*)**
 - Alaska Shorebird Group Boreal Partners in Flight Outreach Group. Supports efforts to keep common birds common and reverse large declines by many species over the last 50 years. Outreach activities have been proposed or are currently in place for engagement in bird conservation. Project topics include bird friendly coffee, bird trail, 3 billion birds, bird banding with youth, and marine debris.

- *Marine debris (Robb Kaler)*: A statewide marine debris plan is currently being developed. The outreach efforts are part of the drafted initiative.
- *3 Billion Birds (Tamara Zeller)*: Developing a draft communication plan to focus on impactful messages for Alaska. The plan uses the 7 simple steps as a guide, but additional steps have been identified as well. Alaska is a nursery for many birds, what can you do to help with the loss of birds. Need Alaska specific numbers of loss. Nichole Michel offered to apply code to estimate loss in Alaska, using BBS data in Alaska. Looking at short and long-distance migrants and by BCR. Make people aware that Alaska is not in isolation from 3BB.
- *Conservation Coffee (Callie Gesmundo)*: Campaign started in 2021 and so far, there have been 4 presentations, 3 bird festivals, 2 press releases, and +1,600 people reached. Bird friendly coffee awareness week in February. Within Alaska, Uncle Leroy's Coffee in Anchorage has started sourcing bird friendly coffee, but they are not interested in becoming part of the official program. Nationwide, the USFWS NCTC training center must now provide bird friendly coffee to all visitors. To move the program further, USFWS will need to form an official partnership with the bird friendly coffee campaign.
- *Anchorage birding trail (Rick Lanctot, Callie Gesmundo)*: A variety of bird information signs will be established within Anchorage. The first signs are at Otter Lake, JBER (not part of the birding trail) and Basher Bog in Far North Bicentennial Park. The audience for these signs are the public and tourists. The signs will be linked in a series using QR codes that can provide additional information via websites (i.e., eBird, McCauley Library). More funding is needed for additional signs and corporate sponsorship may be a good idea. A single 24 X 36 sign cost \$1,600 including shipping from Pennsylvania. Any Alaska birds species can be included on the signs.
- *Bird Banding with youth (Lindsay Hermanns)*: Bird banding with youth in Utqiagvik. Also plan to establish a Utqiagvik Shorebird Festival next year for a day or two. The curriculum is in development and ideas and help are welcomed! Lindsay plans to reach out to the community college, North Slope Borough Wildlife Department, Tuzzy Consortium Library, USFWS, and the elder program.

11:15-11:35 Avian Influenza update (*Andrew Ramey, USGS*)

- Avian A viruses transmit through fecal/oral intake and has developed into a highly pathogenic virus. This virus was exclusively to domestic poultry, but in the last 20 years has transmitted to wild birds. Since 2002 wild outbreaks have become more common and since 2005 outbreaks among poultry have become more common.
- In December 2021 a new HPAI outbreak began with origin from Europe and Asia. As of December 5, 2022, there is only one confirmed case of human infection in the U.S. and the CDC marks avian influenza as low risk to people.

- The effects of HPAI can be variable; foxes, other mammals and raptors can all be exposed and effected. Dabbling ducks have been asymptomatic (small proportion found dead) but birds with symptoms usually appear to be spinning in circle or unable to old their heads up.
- Mortality in wild birds can be significant. The extent has been confirmed in 48 states and greater than 100 species of wild birds have been affected. In total, 52.8 million domestic birds have been affected since Dec 2021. 4,000+ confirmed detections.
- The most common species with confirmed infection are mallard, black vulture, Canada goose, and bald eagle. In Alaska, mallards, bald eagle, common raven and glaucous gull are the most effected.
- Shorebirds are susceptible to HPAI, but there are only 13 detection in shorebirds. Dunlin is the only confirmed case in Alaska.
- Q/A: Is the breakout slowing? The number of dying birds is not decline and mortality is ongoing in South America, Venezuela, Asia.
- Q/A: What are the population level impacts? Population level impacts are unknown at this time and additional surveys are needed to determine true impact to population.
- Q/A: Do all birds need to be culled or only a few? If a single bird is sick, then all birds need to be culled. CDC guidelines have been modified and chickens need to be depopulated but waterfowl may not be needed to be depopulated.
- Call USFWS sick or dead birds (1-866-527-3358) if you find a dead bird. Questions can be directed towards Andy Ramey (aramey@usgs.gov).

11:35-11:50 Other Shorebird Activities of interest

- **Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms (*Sarah Saalfeld*)**
 - Arcticbirds.net is a web form used to keep track of annual conditions across the Arctic (and Alaska) such as climate, predators and species presences.
- **Shorebird Science and Conservation Collective (*Rick Lanctot*)**
 - New initiative supported by the Knobloch Family foundation. There has been money provided to hire three fellows to create a database of shorebird tracking data across the U.S. The Smithsonian Institute has an established data sharing agreement form for sharing tracking data.
 - The data contributed will be used to help increase protected lands around existing refuges in Texas. All entities contributing data will get a notification if their data is being used.
- **Management activities in 2022 (*Mary Anne Bishop*)**
 - There was a proposed addition to the Robert Bank Terminal at the Fraser River Estuary in British Columbia. The Port Authority has responded to mitigation of impacts, stating that they can create biofilm. The port expansion may impact orca whales, salmon runs and shorebird stopover location. A decision will be made by Christmas. Two competing proposals on location of new port location.
- **Listservs: Alaska Shorebird Group, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership's Shorebird Working Group (*Rick Lanctot*)**

- Ask to be added or removed from the listservs for ASG, WHSG or EEAF. Email Rick Lanctot

13:00-14:00 Tracking devices for shorebirds session

Ignite talk: Factors affecting success of back-mounted tracking devices in shorebirds (*Emily Weiser*)

- An analysis of tag success was conducted using back-mounted tags with remote data download. Thirty-four projects contributed data including 79 sites, 25 species, and 1,516 birds.
- Tag success is defined by tags that reached their expected lifespan (truncated at 365 days) and the birds was alive, and tag was active. The cause of failure is usually unknown.
- A Cox Proportional analysis with the covariates (no-effect) capture season, birds body mass, power source, harness material.
- Preliminary Findings: The tags placed on birds that comprised 7% of their body mass were twice as likely to fail as tags that comprised the average 3% of a bird's body mass. Leg-loop harnesses had a significantly lower risk of failure than glue or body harness. Also, Motus and cellular networks both had a higher risk of failure than a single station; satellite tags had lowest risk of failure. Glue attachments, patch and feather trim and patch only had lowest failure rate for tags. Finally, tags on males had slightly less of a risk of failure than tags on females.

Discussion:

- Brand of tag was not included in the first round of analyses but would be an important covariate to examine. Julie saw a difference in success of different brands for Olive-sided Flycatcher tags.
- Rick Lanctot comments: The definition of success can be arbitrary, and the body mass percentage of a tag can also be variable in its effect on success. For example, some birds do best with a tag as a large percentage of their body mass, while others do well with as a smaller percentage. The size and shape of the tag may also influence success.
- Motus has advantages for local studies, but at a large scale the network can be very expensive and may not provide more information than what is already known.
- Dan: Recommends sharing information about attachment methods as a community, for example, Red Knots don't do well with leg loops but are ok with glue-on transmitters. Failures are not always published, but we should still discuss them.
- Katie: How do we incentivize manufacturer to make tags that are more aerodynamic? It is possible if you plan to buy many tags. For example, Max Plank bought 200 tags from Microwave Technology, and they created a 2g tag specific to their projects.
- Lee: It would be good to have a guideline for how tight a tag should be fastened to a bird. This can be a challenge due to fluctuations in body mass across the annual cycle. One way is to stay consistent with a measuring tool. Wally uses a standard 2mm wooden dowel to measure the area between the bird and the back of a tag.
- Zak: Where are birds gaining fat? Does their body change where fat is gained once a harness is fitted? Are they gaining fat in the same places?

14:00 – 14:15 Election of Officers

2023 and 2024 Executive Committee Chair: Laura McDuffie

2023 and 2024 Executive Committee Secretary: Arin Underwood

Executive Committee Members: Sarah Hoepfner, Janell Larsen Tempel, Lindsay Hermanns, Emily Weiser, Mary Anne Bishop, Rick Lanctot

14:15 – 15:30 Implementing the Alaska Shorebird Plan

- **ASG mission and vision statements (*Mary Anne Bishop, Katie Christie*)**
 - Draft Mission Statement: The ASG represents academic and private researchers, federal and state agency staff, conservation organizations and shorebird enthusiasts dedicated to shorebirds and the habitats they depend in throughout their annual cycle. Our mission is to raise public awareness of shorebirds and to promote research, monitoring, management, and conservation of this unique group of birds.
 - Vision statement: To create impactful, collaborative partnerships that work to maintain sustainable shorebird populations and inspire conservation actions.

- **Alaska Shorebird Group projects from past to present (*Laura McDuffie*)**
 - 28 annual summaries, 11 publications, 1 data release in 2022.
 - An online Leaflet map is now available to view all current and past projects.
 - It was suggested that we add a place for seasonal job openings on the ASG website.

- **Revisiting objectives of the shorebird plan – where are we and what needs to be done?**
 - Objective 1: Identifying factors limiting survival and reproduction; Objective 2: Obtain data necessary to detect trends; Objective 3: Identify, restore, and/or conserve critical habitat during breeding, migration and non-breeding period. (Applied conservation); Objective 4: Environmental education and outreach; Objective 5: International collaboration
 - The ASG group worked through a priority species progress list to determine where gaps exist and where future research should be focused.
 - River Gates: Other objectives outside of these written objectives are possible (e.g., management of shrimp farming in South America).
 - To reach objective we need to communicate with partners outside of Alaska and the U.S. Can we dovetail on other people's/organizations efforts? Contacting Flyway partners or land management agencies may be a great first step.
 - To reflect changes in objectives within our group we can create a spreadsheet with updates (e.g., species trends, abundance) instead of revising the shorebird plan every year. Brad Andres is updating the shorebird conservation plan in 2023 so we can potentially incorporate some new objectives into our groups scope of work.