AMOY Working Group Meeting Notes
All meeting sessions were recorded on Zoom and are available for viewing
Wednesday February 3, 2021

Shiloh Schulte – Recovery Initiative update

- PPT available
  - 20th AMOY Working Group Meeting!
  - Presented overview of history of working group and AMOY Recovery Initiative.
  - Summary of Business Plan objectives and project locations (not complete)
  - Summary of accomplishments of the Working Group – both group efforts and specific projects
  - Conservation Strategies
  - 2020 Productivity – **overall average 0.47 chicks/pair. Average since 2008 0.51.**
  - Population trend – **23% increase 2003-2018**.

- Note – there is potentially another revision of the BNA account in the near future – stay tuned for more information.

Q&A

- Sarah Karpanty provided link to predation management BP document: https://atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/guidance-bp-predation/#:~:text=The%20Atlantic%20Flyway%20Shorebird%20Initiative,taken%20to%20address%20the%20threat.
- Pairs listed for overall productivity in Shiloh's presentation are just monitored pairs, not state totals
- 2018 winter survey conditions – how may that have impacted results? Frozen conditions were an issue but some counts were redone and coverage was likely good.
- 2023 survey – what will individual roles be within each state. TBD.

Ivo Tejeda, Sharon Montecino – Presentations on AMOY work in Chile

- *H. p. pitanay* as well as *H. ater* and *H. leucopodus*
- PPT available
- Chilean Shorebird Protection Network

Q&A

- Do you know how many pairs on are protected lands versus unprotected?
  - No, not at this point.
- What is the breeding season there?
  - Season starts in August/September and lasts normally to January/February, but in the last two years have seen some pairs breeding in March, April, and even May and raising chicks, which is quite strange. They haven't followed the pairs all season, but they think these could be re-nesting pairs in central Chile where beaches are very crowded.
- Predator cages? Can you talk more about that?

    - Anti-predator shelters were successful for dogs but not for fox. Native fox are small and they could get through the entrances for the adults. Have been reducing the size of the entrances so dogs couldn't get in.
    - They will continue to use and modify. Recently put perch deterrents on the top for raptors and extensions underground for digging predators.
    - No AMOY adults died but some were distressed by the cages but sometimes entered only 10 minutes after installation.
- Can you manage native fox?
    - Quite difficult from the public relations perspective. Controversy of managing a native predator in the wild. May form a group with stakeholders and experts to evaluate what socially acceptable actions could be taken with fox.
- Ultrasound deterrence for fox?
    - AMOY had no response to the ultrasound. Results for fox not well understood yet?
- Are Chile AMOY resident year round?
    - Not sure yet but additional surveys will figure this out. Big flocks in the winter.

Emails for Ivo and Sharon
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Salvadora Morales – AMOY work in Gulf of Foncseca

- PPT available
- Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador – major shrimp farm footprint
- Dykes within shrimp farms used as roosting sites
- Summary of shorebird surveys; resident and migratory populations. Resights of U.S. Atlantic coast banded birds.

Q&A

- Shrimp farmers – how do they view the birds?
    - They group shorebirds with waterbirds. They flush waterbirds and AMOY are disturbed at the same time. Trying to work with farmers to differentiate between the groups and determine whether the birds are actually eating the shrimp.
    - Very difficult to get access to the industry and have not yet received full support. Companies with certifications are the ones with the greatest interest.
    - From Rob Clay - Just to add to Salvadora's reply, we are making some progress with engaging the shrimp industry, including identifying shorebird-friendly management practices, working with farms to adopt them, and more recently looking to integrate them into certification standards. It might take a while, but you'll eventually find shorebird-friendly shrimp on the shelves of your local stores!
- Other banded birds during their surveys?
    - Wilson's Plover, yellow bands from Louisiana. Red Knots, green bands.
- Do young banded AMOY stay in that area prior to reaching breeding age?
    - Resightings are during the winter, Sept. through March/April.
- When do their birds nest?
    - April/May

WHSRN team update – Rob Clay and Arne Lesterhuis

- Emerging opportunities in Latin America – recognizing lots of opportunities to bring the work of the AMOY Working Group to help inform similar approaches throughout the range of the species.
- Since development of the original Conservation Plan, the opportunities for work across the range have increased, more of a network of local partners, orgs, etc. with capacity to address threats. Also more national frameworks and legislation available to support/facilitate work, eg. National shorebird conservation plans, legislation to reduce disturbances on beaches.
- Oystercatchers have so much potential for garnering public support and attention – charismatic species.
- Call to this group to think beyond the current geographic focus.
- Looking to update the range wide plan to guide range wide conservation actions: 1) update population estimates, 2) consider changed conservation landscape for shorebird conservation across these ranges.

- Arne Lesterhuis (WHSRN) – just starting to get better population estimates in Latin America. For example, population estimate for Peru and Chile coasts have been greatly improved based on recent estimates – upwards of 60,000 individuals.
- Another example is overall revisions for estimate for palliatus – 84,500 individuals. Really a first stab, need a full range-wide coordinated survey.

HABITAT RESTORATION SESSION

- Specific project videos available as well as notes from breakout sessions.

BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES

Beneficial Use Session:
Group facilitators: Brad Winn, Samantha Collins, Joe Marchionno

Ruth Boettcher (VA): What is the deal with the 7 Mile Innovation Lab, can others use it?
Sam Collins (NJ): Started in 2019 reach out to director ltedesco@wetlandsintitute.org with questions at Wetlands Institute
General Question: data sharing, where to put dredge materials
Brad Winn (Manomet): Is anyone tracking all of this work and putting it all one place? **Action item for AMOY group**
General Q: What are major hurdles that people are encountering?
Brad Winn: Essential fish habitat constraints
Sue Heath (TX): Doesn't have engineering expertise for rebuilding/designing islands with partners. Corps permits will take a year and funding could expire
Amanda Hackney (TX): need more documentation for elevations, materials
Jeff Liechty (FL): It sounds like a central repository including permitting, project design, funding, etc. would be very useful, perhaps leading to production of BMPs document
Brad Winn: Walker and National Audubon are working on this BMP document for AMOY nesting and winter roosts, not sure if there are material information in there. Brad is looking into how to make depositing dredged materials by Corps a routine beneficial project to shorebirds and sea turtles. A lot of the material is still being shipped off-shore. Micheal Guilfoyle and Walker Golder

and Mike Molnar are the ones driving this effort. Targeting red knot, wintering piping plovers because of their federal status.

Mark Rachel (FL, Tampa Bay area): Is there a way to add something into the formula to take erosion into account for Corps projects?

Brad Winn: Brad is trying to work on "breaking the mold" with the Corps on some of these projects and get more flexibility on them.

David Carson (FL): Permitting is a major factor in the project process. It pays to have one in hand FIRST in order to expedite the rest (helps in obtaining/spending grant funds).

Shell Rake/Island Restoration Session:

Group facilitators: Alex Wilke, Lindsay Addison, Shiloh Schulte, and Janell Brush

Participants: Beth Howard, Neils Lindquist, Alan Wilde, Beth Wright, Bonnie Samuelsen, Bridgid Berger, Allan Berger, Jean Olbert, Jon Altman, Kylie Wilson, Raya Pruner, Meriwether Payne, Caity Reiland-Smith, Ezra Thompson, Michael Ferrara

Alan Wilde (TX): Does anyone have experience with AMOY nesting platforms?

Shiloh Schulte: Monomoy placed platforms in the marsh. Used tires filled with shell/sand to create raised areas, which were used by AMOY but targeted by avian predators (gulls). Created areas along Intercoastal Waterway in SC with increased elevation. Had high levels of mink predation, targeting the raised areas at high tide. High tide habitat limited habitats so mink overlap with few areas where AMOY are nesting. A landscape level restoration strategy in this habitat would be preferred, if possible. Risk of predators higher with smaller scale projects.

Alex Wilke (VA): Just beginning to explore ideas for platforms along shell rakes. Thinking about designing an array of platforms that mimic the shape of shell rake and are fairly transportable structures for ease of installation. They are also considering potential impacts to roosting birds. Maybe consider removing them seasonally but also restore larger sections of the shell rake. They just started testing this idea in VA.

Caity Reiland-Smith and Ezra Thompson (FL, panhandle) are also pilot testing (outside the nesting season) potential small oystercatcher nesting platforms to be used in similar habitats in Florida.

Kylie Wilson (FL, Sarasota County): Beginning to explore how to create nesting habitat inside the bay? Exploring areas for habitat creation/enhancement. If you build it will they come? (West Palm Beach example – David Carson).

Janell Brush (FL): Most restoration/enhancement efforts are focused in known/historical nesting areas. Things to consider when targeting historical nesting areas for restoration: Why are birds not there anymore? Were they limited by available nesting habitat? Forage limited? In habitat creation, care needs to be taken with regards to potential access by predator species and availability of food nearby.

Beach Habitat Breakout:

Group facilitators: Todd Pover, Tim Keyes, Nick Vitale

Tim Keyes (GA): Updated the group briefly on a beachfront project on Sea Island where an offshore bar has migrated into the main beach creating a lagoon between the bar and beach. Local land managers have agreed to use existing equipment used for annual beach renourishment to create a 1-acre nesting island in the lagoon with a narrow land-bridge back to the main beach. This was in part to allow the permit to be completed under existing ACOE and State renourishment permits with Letters of Agreement rather than requiring full permits.

Todd Pover (NJ): Updated the group on several large nesting platforms constructed with NFWF funding

on beaches. They provided excellent nesting habitat for PIPL and AMOY, but were lost after several years due to erosion, though sand is still in the system, so not a total loss.

Kathy Parsons (MA): Updated a project on Dead Neck Sampson's Island which was a partnership with the town of Barnstable to move 125,000 cubic yards of sand to shore up an eroding side of the island and widen the beaches to limit depredation pressure. This action has taken place every 10 years or so, and recently has been successful, bringing AMOY back to the site for the first time in 8 years and doubling PIPL productivity. The biggest challenges were timing the dredging between other channel work required in the area.

Emily Heiser (NJ): Mentioned another beach restoration project in NJ similar to the Barnegat Light project, paid for with USFWS $. This project would remove vegetation and lower dunes.

Karen Beattie (MA): Brought up the potential conflict between managing for coastal resilience, which typically involves building up dunes and planting stabilizing vegetation, versus managing for birds, which is the opposite.

Todd Pover: Confirmed that this was an issue at Barnegat light project, mitigated by building a back dune with vegetation removed from the fore dune.