

## First Meeting of the Americas Flyways Task Force

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### AMBI AMERICAS WORKPLAN



# The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative

CAFF Strategy Series Report  
March 2015

Americas Flyway Workplan 2015-2019



ARCTIC COUNCIL

The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) is a Working Group of the Arctic Council.

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- Environment Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- Faroese Museum of Natural History, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands (Kingdom of Denmark)
- Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Helsinki, Finland
- Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik, Iceland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greenland
- Russian Federation Ministry of Natural Resources, Moscow, Russia
- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Stockholm, Sweden
- United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska

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- Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
- Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) – Greenland, Alaska and Canada
- Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
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For more information please contact:

*CAFF International Secretariat*

*Borgir, Nordurlod*

*600 Akureyri, Iceland*

*Phone: +354 462-3350*

*Fax: +354 462-3390*

[www.caff.is](http://www.caff.is)

[www.facebook.com/CAFFS](https://www.facebook.com/CAFFS)

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# Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI): Introduction and Context

The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI), administered by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group, is a priority project of the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. AMBI is designed to improve the conservation status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations. Through conservation of a shared natural and cultural resource, AMBI will have a positive impact on societies for whom migratory birds are a source of livelihood and spiritual inspiration. AMBI also provides an early implementation of Recommendation #8 of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (<http://arcticbiodiversity.is/>) to 'reduce stressors on migratory species range-wide, including habitat degradation and overharvesting on wintering and staging areas and along flyways and other migration routes'.

AMBI has, through a series of workshops, brought together experts in Arctic migratory bird species and conservation issues from across the globe. These experts identified three major conservation issues facing Arctic migratory birds— habitat loss and degradation, especially of intertidal areas; unsustainable harvest; and marine bycatch. The group also identified priority species (see Annex 1).

A steering committee comprising CAFF members Canada, Russia, Norway, and the United States, along with expert advisors from BirdLife International, was formed to guide the development and implementation of AMBI work plans.

Work plans to identify priority actions to address these issues in each of the four main flyways of the world were developed:

- ▶ East Asian-Australasian Flyway;
- ▶ African-Eurasian Flyway;
- ▶ Americas Flyway;
- ▶ A newly-defined Circumpolar Flyway, which addresses species that spend their entire life cycles in or near the Arctic.

Draft plans were developed by the appropriate steering committee member, along with other willing experts who were deemed instrumental to plan development and implementation. A multi-sectoral consultation on the draft plans was held during the Arctic Biodiversity Congress (Norway, December 2-4, 2014). A final workshop was held adjacent to the Congress to complete the workplans.

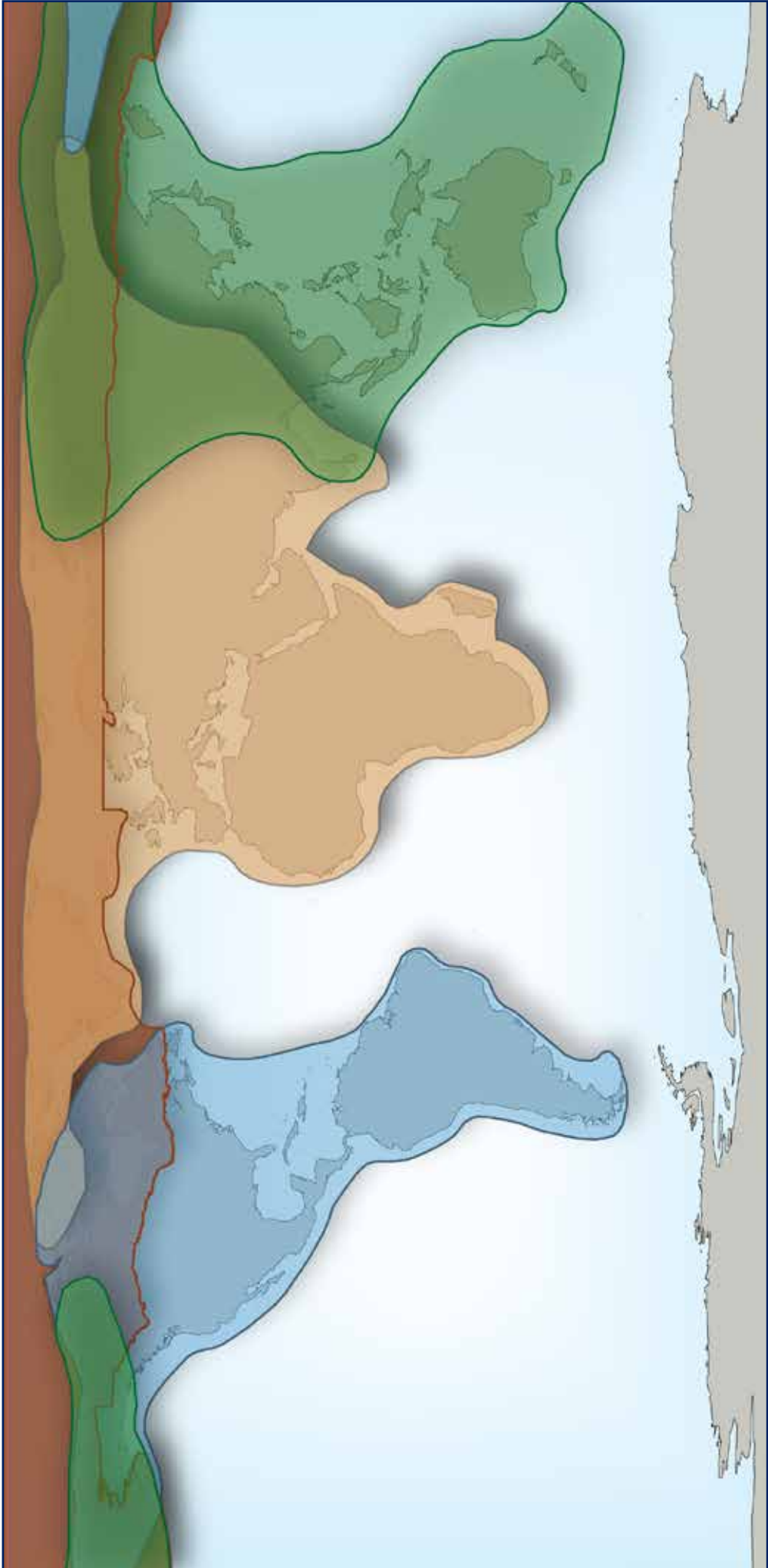
Individual flyway plans are meant to stand alone, so each has a short context-setting section at the front, followed by flyway-specific issues, objectives, and actions.

## Links to other initiatives

In 2013, the Arctic environment ministers emphasized that Arctic biodiversity and ecosystems are irreplaceable assets of local regional and global importance and that decisive actions should be taken to help protect biodiversity and sustain valuable ecosystem services. Some migratory birds are rapidly diminishing in numbers and ministers underlined the need for improved cooperation to identify the driving forces for this development and to identify possible joint action.

Implementation of the AMBI workplan will help governments meet these and other commitments under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) at global and hemispheric levels. Relevant global agreements are listed below; hemispheric and regional agreements are identified within individual flyway work plans. CAFF has Resolutions of Cooperation with several MEAs and works with the NGOs below, which will make it easier to work collaboratively on AMBI.

AMBI is designed to build on and support existing international, regional and local bird conservation initiatives such as BirdLife International, who have the on-the-ground capacity to make concrete progress for Arctic migratory bird conservation.



Map 1. AMBI Flyways

- Americas Flyway
- Circumpolar Flyway
- East Asian-Australasian Flyway
- African-Eurasian Flyway

## BirdLife International

BirdLife (<http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/partnership/about-birdlife>) is widely recognised as a world leader in bird conservation. It is a collection of more than 150 partner organizations from around the globe. Each BirdLife Partner is an independent non-governmental organisation.

The BirdLife partnership has six Regional BirdLife Coordination Offices throughout the world and a Global Office in Cambridge, UK – together known as “The BirdLife International Secretariat”. The Secretariat co-ordinates and facilitates BirdLife International strategies, programmes and policies.

BirdLife’s program objectives are congruent with those of AMBI and include:

- ▶ Prevent extinctions
- ▶ Keep common birds common
- ▶ Identify, conserve, restore and monitor the sites and habitats important for birds and other biodiversity
- ▶ Promote resilient ecological networks
- ▶ Promote policies that support sustainability
- ▶ Promote local conservation action

BirdLife is an active participant in AMBI, particularly in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the African-Eurasian Flyway.

## Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity ([www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)) is an international treaty with three main goals: conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); sustainable use of its components; and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. Its objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The Convention was opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993.

Of particular relevance to AMBI are the **Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12** of the **Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Strategic Plan 2011-2020**, which commit countries to prevent extinction of threatened species and increase the overall area and improve the quality of terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats in protected areas, as well other effective area-based conservation measures, integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes. The CBD’s lead partner regarding the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species is the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

## Convention on Migratory Species

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or Bonn Convention; [www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty that came into force on 1 November 1983. Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed on Appendix I of the Convention. CMS Parties strive towards strict protection of listed species, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes conservation action among the Range States of many of these species. Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in Appendix II of the Convention. For this reason, the Convention encourages the Range States to conclude global or regional Agreements.

The CMS has developed a **Strategic Plan for Migratory Species for 2015-2023**, based on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which has five strategic goals that all closely align with AMBI:

- ▶ Goal 1: Address the underlying causes of decline of migratory species by mainstreaming relevant conservation and sustainable use priorities across government and society
- ▶ Goal 2: Reduce the direct pressures on migratory species and their habitats
- ▶ Goal 3: Improve the conservation status of migratory species and the ecological connectivity and resilience of their habitats
- ▶ Goal 4: Enhance the benefits to all from the favorable conservation status of migratory species
- ▶ Goal 5: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

To facilitate delivering major parts of this Strategic Plan, at the 11th Conference of the Parties to CMS (Quito, Ecuador, Nov 2014) Parties adopted a **Programme of Work (POW) on Migratory Birds and Flyways 2014-2023**. The POW brings together for the world’s flyways all the major actions required to promote the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. The POW focuses on the migratory birds rather than on CMS itself, in keeping with the aim of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species, its goals and targets. The POW also aims to encourage cooperation and streamlining of actions as well to avoid unnecessary duplication with existing thematic work programmes and other ongoing/planned initiatives within and outside of the CMS family.

The **African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)** is a regional agreement under the CMS that will be a key implementation vehicle for AMBI. The POW specifically acknowledges the tripartite CAFF/CMS/AEWA joint work plan 2013-2015 to encourage information sharing and cooperation with non-Arctic countries on migratory bird conservation issues. Furthermore, the POW requests that the CMS Secretariat strengthen links with the Secretariat of the Arctic Council's Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), in the framework of the existing Resolution of Cooperation, especially to ensure that CAFF's Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative has maximum synergies with the POW to capitalize on the flyway approach in gaining global support for the conservation of the Arctic environment.

## Ramsar

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, known as the Ramsar Convention ([www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)), is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to:

1. Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands;
2. Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management;
3. Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

By setting international standards for wetland conservation and providing a forum for discussing global wetland issues, the Convention enables Contracting Parties to share information on wetlands and address issues together. Groups of Contracting Parties with a common geographical focus or goal can also work together as "**Regional Initiatives operating within the framework of the Ramsar Convention**". Ramsar's 15 Regional Initiatives are divided into 11 networks for cooperation and 4 training centres. Regional networks provide a platform for collaboration between governments, technical experts, international NGOs, local communities and private companies. Training centres promote scientific and technical cooperation and exchange of knowledge in the region. Regional Initiatives are driven by Ramsar Administrative Authorities responsible for implementing the Convention in their countries.

At the Ramsar Convention's 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties held in 2008, parties adopted Resolution X.22 "Promoting international cooperation for the conservation of waterbird flyways" that "Strongly encourages Contracting Parties and other governments actively to support and participate in relevant international plans and programmes for the conservation of shared migratory waterbirds and their habitats" and "Urges the governing bodies of flyway initiatives to take steps to share knowledge and expertise on best practices in the development and implementation of flyway-scale waterbird conservation policies and practices, including successful means of disseminating critical supporting data and information to stakeholders and others".

## World Heritage Convention

The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention; <http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention>) was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two. Its most significant feature is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties.

The Convention sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential World Heritage sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage. The States Parties are encouraged to integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage into regional planning programmes, set up staff and services at their sites, undertake scientific and technical conservation research and adopt measures which give this heritage a function in the day-to-day life of the community.





Photo: Morten Ekker

## AMBI Flyway workplans

Each workplan identifies one or more of the three priority conservation issues identified at the Montreal meeting to address the conservation needs of selected focal species. Actions proposed by AMBI are designed to bring added value to ongoing conservation programs, or to address issues that are currently underrepresented. It is important to note that while the plans address certain issues and focal species, AMBI generally is interested in conservation of all Arctic-breeding migratory bird species, and in future the species and issues foci may change as needed to address new or worsening conservation concerns. Indeed, AMBI may take advantage of unexpected opportunities to advance Arctic bird conservation, should they arise.

Workplan action items anticipate that the following types of activities will be required by some or all CAFF countries, the CAFF management board, or the CAFF secretariat in order to achieve some of the plan's objectives;

- ▶ **Profile raising** through diplomatic and other state-level interventions by the Arctic Councils' Senior Arctic Officials. As a multi-nation body with Observer countries along the flyways, the Council is in a position to advance AMBI's objectives within countries' Foreign Affairs departments as well as their Environment departments and in some cases Development Aid departments.
- ▶ **Fund-raising** to enable on-the-ground conservation organizations to undertake actions in cooperation with relevant countries. The work plans will be used as fund-raising tools to enable on-the-ground conservation and education work to occur.
- ▶ **Capacity-building** through exchanges of experience and knowledge. There are nations within and outside of the Arctic Council that have experience in bird conservation that can be shared with others along the flyways.
- ▶ **Conservation action** within Arctic Council member countries. The workplans can direct work in the Arctic itself where member countries have jurisdiction.

## Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The workplans are the final outputs of AMBI at the end of the Canadian Chairmanship of both CAFF and the Arctic Council (April 2015).

By summer 2015, action items will be further developed to a greater level of detail, with task identification, resource requirements, timelines, and detailed evaluation measures described.

Another important task to be completed by the fall of 2015 will be to have a robust evaluation methodology in place for AMBI, to be used at the end of current workplan timeline (year 4).

Implementation will be phased over the next four years (2015-2019), depending on the action. A midpoint review of implementation of each workplan will be undertaken at the end of 2017, which coincides with the end of Norway's chairmanship of CAFF, and the end of the United States' chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Adjustments made to enable a) completion of certain actions by the end of year 4; or b) to recognize that certain actions will not be achieved within the timeline. A final evaluation of both individual flyway plans and the overall AMBI project will be undertaken in 2019. This timing also prepares countries to report on progress to achieving Aichi targets, as accomplished through the AMBI, in 2020.

At both the mid-point (2017) and end (2019) of this AMBI workplan, reports will also go to the Arctic Council Ministerial meetings, as part of CAFF's biennial reporting on implementation of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment recommendations.



## Annex 1. Priority species for AMBI conservation efforts

Priority species for AMBI conservation efforts, as identified at the inaugural AMBI meeting of experts in Montreal, February 2013. Note that species were further prioritized at later meetings; therefore, not all species in this table are addressed in flyway action plans.

\*notes species that are priorities for this work plan.

Flyway	Species	IUCN <sup>1</sup>	CMS <sup>2</sup>	AEWA Action Plan <sup>3</sup>
East Asian-Australasian	Bar-tailed godwit* ( <i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i> and <i>mensbeiri</i> )	LC	App II	n/a
	Dunlin* ( <i>Calidris alpina arctica</i> )	LC	App II	n/a
	Great Knot* ( <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i> )	VU	App I	n/a
	Red Knot* ( <i>Calidris canutus rogersi</i> and <i>piersmai</i> )	LC	App II	n/a
	Spoon-billed Sandpiper* ( <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i> )	CR	App I	n/a
	Lesser White-fronted Goose* ( <i>Anser erythropus</i> )	VU	App I	A 1a 1b 1c, 2
Americas (Pacific, Mississippi, Central and Atlantic flyways)	Buff-breasted Sandpiper ( <i>Calidris subruficollis</i> )	NT	App I	n/a
	Red Knot* ( <i>Calidris canutus rufa</i> )	LC	App I	n/a
	Red Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus roselaari</i> )	LC	App II	n/a
	Semipalmated Sandpiper* ( <i>Calidris pusilla</i> )	NT	App I	n/a
	Hudsonian Godwit ( <i>Limosa haemastica</i> )	LC	App II	n/a
Central Pacific	Bristle-thighed Curlew ( <i>Numenius tahitensis</i> )	VU	App I	n/a
African-Eurasian (East Atlantic, Mediterranean/Black Sea flyways)	Black-tailed Godwit* ( <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> )	NT	App II	A 4
	Bar-tailed Godwit* ( <i>Limosa lapponica taymyrensis</i> )	LC	App II	B 2a 2c
	Broad-billed Sandpiper ( <i>Limicola falcinellus</i> )	LC	App II	A 3c
	Dunlin* ( <i>Calidris alpina arctica</i> and <i>schinzii</i> )	LC	App II	A 1c, 2, 3a
	Red Knot* ( <i>Calidris canutus canutus</i> and <i>islandica</i> )	LC	App II	B 2a 2c
	Ruff ( <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> )	LC	App II	B 2c
	Lesser White-fronted Goose* ( <i>Anser erythropus</i> )	VU	App I	A1a 1b 1c, 2
Circumpolar (east-west migration within circumpolar Arctic)	Ivory Gull* ( <i>Pagophila eburnea</i> )	NT		n/a
	Kittlitz's Murrelet ( <i>Brachyramphus brevirostris</i> )	NT		n/a
	Thick-billed Murre* ( <i>Uria lomvia</i> )	LC		B 2c
	Velvet Scoter ( <i>Melanitta fusca</i> )	EN	App II	A 2a 2c
	Black Scoter ( <i>Melanitta nigra</i> )	NT	App II	B 2a 2c
	Steller's Eider* ( <i>Polysticta stelleri</i> )	EN	App I	A 1a 1b 2
	Common Eider* ( <i>Somateria mollissima</i> )	LC	App II	B 1 2d
	Long-tailed Duck* ( <i>Clangula hyemalis</i> )	VU	App II	B 2c
	Yellow-billed Loon ( <i>Gavia Adamsii</i> ) (except Iceland and Greenland)	NT	App II	A 1c
	Snowy Owl* ( <i>Nyctea scandiaca</i> )	LC		n/a

<sup>1</sup> IUCN Red List Category: CR Critically Endangered, EN Endangered, VU Vulnerable, NT Near Threatened, LC Least Concern

<sup>2</sup> Convention on Migratory Species Appendices. Appendix I lists species for which Parties should endeavour to provide immediate protection; Appendix II lists species for which Parties should endeavour to conclude Agreements covering the conservation and management.

<sup>3</sup> Listing from the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, Table 1. Status of the population of migratory waterbirds in the Action Plan:

A1:

- a. Species, which are included in Appendix I to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory species of Wild Animals;
- b. Species, which are listed as threatened on the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species, as reported in the most recent summary by BirdLife International; or
- c. Populations, which number less than around 10,000 individuals.

A2: Populations numbering between around 10,000 and around 25,000 individuals.

A3: Populations numbering between around 25,000 and around 100,000 individuals and considered to be at risk as a result of:

- a. Concentration onto a small number of sites at any stage of their annual cycle;
- b. Dependence on a habitat type, which is under severe threat;
- c. Showing significant long-term decline; or
- d. Showing large fluctuations in population size or trend.

A4: Species, which are listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List of threatened species, as reported in the most recent summary by BirdLife International, but do not fulfil the conditions in respect of Category 1, 2 or 3, as described above, and which are pertinent for international action.

B1: Populations numbering between around 25,000 and around 100,000 individuals and which do not fulfil the conditions in respect of A, as described above.

B2: Populations numbering more than around 100,000 individuals and considered to be in need of special attention as a result of:

- a. Concentration onto a small number of sites at any stage of their annual cycle;
- b. Dependence on a habitat type, which is under severe threat;
- c. Showing significant long-term decline; or
- d. Showing large fluctuations in population size or trend.

## East Asian Australasian Flyway priority species in this workplan



Bar-tailed Godwit (spp. *baueri* and *mensbeiri*)



Dunlin (spp. *arctica*)



Great Knot



Red Knot (spp. *rogersi* and *piersmai*)



Spoon-billed Sandpiper



Lesser White-fronted Goose

## African Eurasian Flyway priority species in this workplan



Black-tailed Godwit



Bar-tailed Godwit (spp. *taymyrensis*)



Lesser White-fronted Goose



Dunlin (spp. *arctica* and *schinzii*)



Red Knot (spp. *canutus* and *islandica*)

## Americas Flyway priority species in this workplan



Red Knot (spp. *rufa* and *roselaari*)



Semipalmated Sandpiper

## Circumpolar Flyway priority species in this workplan



Ivory Gull



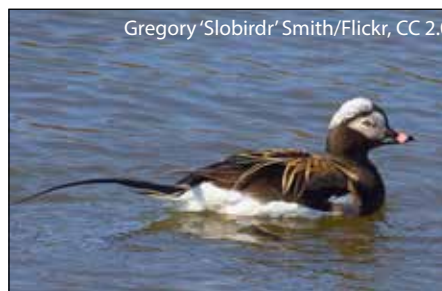
Thick-billed Murre



Steller's Eider



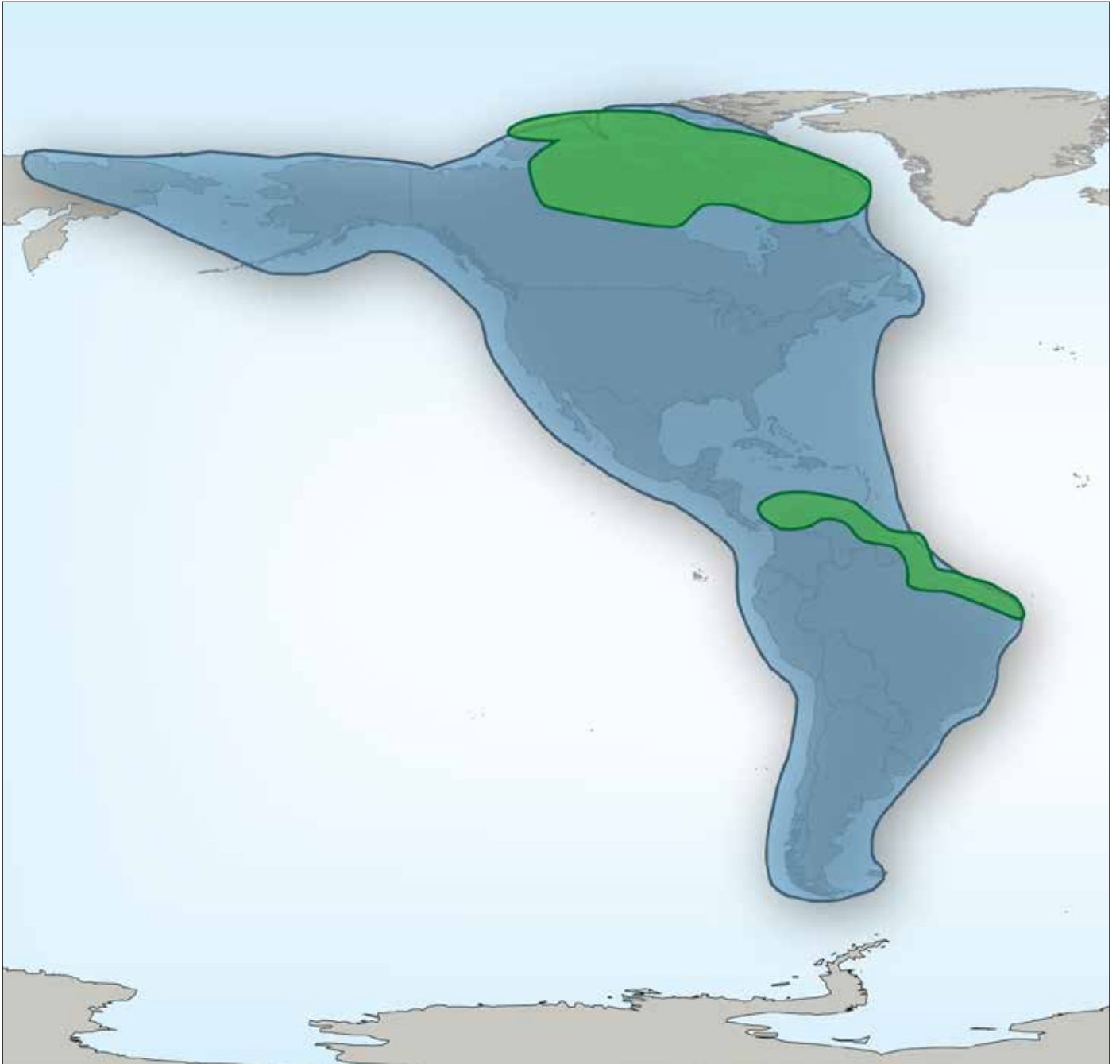
Common Eider




Long-tailed Duck



Snowy Owl



Map 3. Americas Flyway

 Key areas of interest for the AMBI Americas workplan

# Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI): Workplan for the Americas Flyway

**Rob Clay**

*Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, Paraguay*

**Garry Donaldson**

*Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada*

**Victoria Johnston**

*Strategic Policy Branch, Environment Canada*

**Richard Lancot**

*US Fish and Wildlife Service*

*Contributors to the development of this workplan are listed in Annex 3.*



Red knots resting on stop over site during their long migration. Photo: Peter Prokosch, UNEP GRID-Arendal



## Introduction

The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) is a project undertaken by the Arctic Council, through its Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group. The overall objective of AMBI is to improve the status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations. The Arctic Council recognizes that much of the conservation action needed to meet this objective will occur outside of the Arctic. Therefore AMBI is organized around flyways that Arctic migratory birds traverse throughout their life cycles.

AMBI's work is guided by a steering committee, and specific goals and actions are developed through flyway-specific workplans.

## The AMBI Americas Flyway

This flyway hosts Arctic-breeding birds that winter within the Americas outside of the Arctic. It includes the Pacific, Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic flyways. AMBI is interested in conservation of all of the Arctic's migratory birds that move through this flyway. However, the first phase of AMBI, as represented in this workplan, focuses on priority species and issues that were identified at a global AMBI experts' workshop in Montreal (Canada) in February 2014 (<http://www.caff.is/strategies-series/274-the-arctic-migratory-birds-initiative-expert-workshop-report-montreal-canada-feb>), and were later refined at an experts workshop hosted by UNEP's Regional Office for North America in Washington D.C. (USA) in October 2014 and in Trondheim (Norway) in December 2014.

AMBI is designed to complement existing international and regional migratory bird conservation initiatives such as the WHSRN, the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). Actions under these initiatives will be coordinated to ensure synergies and avoid duplication. A short description of these initiatives is in Annex 2.

Notwithstanding the focus of this workplan, AMBI may take advantage of opportunities that arise to undertake strategic conservation actions on priority species or in geographies that lie outside of this workplan, but that deal with Arctic-breeding migratory birds that have conservation concerns along the flyway.

Future phases of AMBI may have different focal species, depending on the success of the current plan and the urgency with which other species need to be considered in the future.

## Priority species and conservation issues

### Species

**Red Knot** (*Calidris canutus*) is a priority species for this plan. This is a circumpolar species that is exhibiting troubling declines in a number of its subspecies. The *rufa* is listed as Endangered in Argentina, Chile and Canada, and has recently been listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the United States. The subspecies *roselaari* is listed as Threatened in Canada and Mexico.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** (*Calidris pusilla*) is the other priority species targeted by this workplan. This species, once one of the most common of the small sandpipers in the Americas, seems to have experienced widespread declines in at least the eastern portion of the hemisphere and likely in the central portion as well.

The Semipalmated Sandpiper and the *rufa* Red Knot are both listed on Appendix 1 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). This listing means that range states that are CMS Parties should undertake actions to protect and restore the species and its habitats. Range states of these two species in the Americas that are members of CMS include Argentina, Cuba, France [French Guiana] and Uruguay. Brazil is in the process of joining CMS. Non-Party Countries that are range states to these migratory birds are also invited to work together to support the conservation of these birds through various other non-binding sub-agreements such as the Americas Flyways Framework, adopted as part of Resolution 11.14 at CMS COP11.

Numerous co-occurring species (see Annex 1) will also benefit from the conservation actions proposed for these two species. This includes both resident and migratory species.

## Conservation issues

The loss and degradation of wetland habitat along the flyway is the focal conservation issue for this workplan. These threats are numerous and include coastal development; climate change effects on coastal and tundra habitats; and impairment of key sites through human-induced disturbance.

Development of coastal infrastructure, farming that necessitates impoundment or draining of coastal wetlands and disturbance at shorebird roosting sites are issues directly related to human activity in more southern parts of the flyway. In the north, indirect consequences of human activity from climate change and habitat destruction by overabundant populations of Snow (Chen caerulescens) and Ross' (Chen rossii) geese (collectively referred to as 'white geese') are of concern for shorebird conservation on portions of the breeding grounds. Though there are other conservation issues, this particular suite was chosen, in concert with the geographic foci (below) for this first phase of AMBI, because a) they are not yet being addressed with a shorebird-centric focus on a flyway level; and b) they are expected to have (if they are not already having) a significant negative impact on the two focal species of this plan, in the focal geography.

## Geographic focus

The geographic focus of this workplan is the eastern and central Canadian Arctic, and the northern coast of South America (from Caribbean Colombia to northeastern Brazil). Americas flyway experts at the AMBI workshop in Washington D.C. determined that this scope enabled AMBI to focus on a well-defined set of issues and actions that are a) not currently being addressed adequately from the perspective of AMBI focal species; b) have serious conservation implications for the focal species; c) will also have benefits to a wide number of co-occurring species; and d) can include significant contributions from indigenous organizations and traditional knowledge holders.

The central and eastern Canadian Arctic is the geographic region where the issues of climate change effects on breeding habitat and habitat destruction by white geese species, encompass much of the breeding range of the rufa subspecies of Red Knot and of the Semipalmated Sandpiper.

The northern coast of South America, and in particular the coastline from eastern Guyana through Suriname and French Guiana to northern Brazil, is an extremely important wintering area for Arctic (and boreal) breeding shorebirds, including the Semipalmated Sandpiper. Semipalmated Sandpipers from the eastern breeding grounds are believed to primarily winter in northern South America, in addition to some birds that breed further west. Part of the rufa Red Knot population winters in this area (primarily in northern Brazil), and it is also a stopover area for the long-distance migrant population of rufa that winters in southernmost South America.

## Other initiatives

Through funding from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC-the environmental arm of the North American Free Trade Agreement), AMBI-Americas has the opportunity to advance conservation of its focal species. AMBI's CEC project will undertake a number of the actions in the AMBI Americas plan. It will also allow AMBI to extend its conservation efforts to habitats in Mexico, and to the roselaari subspecies of Red Knot, which uses the Pacific Flyway and is also of significant conservation concern.

The AMBI sees great value in supporting ongoing hemispheric-level processes. The first of these is the **Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative and its Business Strategy and Plan** (<http://www.cms.int/en/document/atlantic-flyway-shorebird-conservation-business-strategy-call-action-phase-1>). The Atlantic business plan is relevant to this first phase of AMBI, as it addresses shorebird species and habitats that include the AMBI's current foci. The AMBI Americas workplan has been developed in close coordination with the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative, to link complementary goals, build synergies and ensure efficiencies of effort. Efforts are also underway to develop a similar initiative (a business plan) for the Pacific Flyway. AMBI will no doubt wish to support this Plan in the future.

## Objectives and Actions

Migratory bird issues transcend habitats, countries, and cultures, as do conservation solutions. AMBI recognizes that collaboration between countries, communities, and individual stakeholders is key to success of the initiative. Therefore, AMBI stresses that the actions listed below are best achieved with deliberate inclusiveness and invites the perspectives and participation of stakeholders during implementation of this Plan. They will be implemented in coordination with other relevant migratory bird conservation initiatives where appropriate.

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### ***Objective 1. Evaluate, and determine appropriate mitigations, to impacts of overabundant goose populations on Arctic shorebird habitat.***

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Populations of white geese in the eastern and central North American Arctic have dramatically increased over the past 30 years. In some areas, like the west coast of Hudson Bay, large areas that were formerly sedge tundra have been reduced to a monoculture of moss or even bare ground. In less extreme cases, goose grazing reduces sedge height, which decreases use by nesting shorebirds. The Western Canadian and Alaskan Arctic are so far less affected, but even there goose populations are increasing and significant habitat impacts are expected in the future.

It is believed that stringent hunting regulations introduced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (to protect what were then very small goose populations facing high hunting pressure) and the recent abundance of food from agricultural operations on the wintering grounds have made the current population explosion possible.

A cause-effect relationship between goose-caused habitat destruction and decline in shorebird populations has not yet been established. However there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that this may be the case. This is of particular concern for Semipalmated Sandpiper. Its declining eastern and central Arctic population breeding habitats overlap significantly with white goose breeding areas.

White goose populations continue to rise in North America, and their zones of impact continue to expand on the breeding grounds. There is a clear and urgent need to determine the conservation impact that this is having on other species, particularly shorebirds.

**Action 1 Conduct research that is designed to identify and quantify the magnitude and mechanism(s) of impact that white goose habitat destruction has on breeding populations of shorebirds, in particular Semipalmated Sandpipers, in the eastern and Central Canadian Arctic.** For example, research into this issue is being undertaken through the Arctic Goose Joint Venture (e.g., Dr. Paul Smith's Southampton Island/Coats Island research project).

The success of this action item, led by the AGJV, will be measured by a) the production, within the determined timeline, of research design, data, and interpretation of results; b) the transmission of this information to co-management boards and other wildlife managers within the affected area so that informed management action can be taken.

**Action 2 Incorporate Inuit knowledge and advice into management recommendations.** It is a common, but largely untested, assumption among western science practitioners that Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) information is mostly limited to larger or harvested bird species. Under the co-management systems established by land claims agreements in the Canadian Arctic, TEK and the perspectives of Inuit must be incorporated into management decisions, including those that relate to the goose-shorebird-habitat issue. Specifically, AMBI will encourage work to a) articulate Inuit research questions regarding the impacts of goose habitat degradation on other birds; b) document observations and other forms of TEK from two Arctic communities regarding shorebird responses to increased white goose numbers; and c) gather Inuit recommendations and advice regarding management of the issue.

The success of this action item will be measured by a) the production, within the determined timeline, of research design, data, and compilation of results; b) the transmission of this information to co-management boards and other wildlife managers within the affected area so that informed management action can be taken.

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**Objective 2. Evaluate and determine appropriate mitigations to loss and shifting of shorebird habitat from climate change.**

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Climate change is expected to cause large changes in the quantity, quality, and location of Arctic habitats. This is one of a number of factors (e.g., disruption of lemming cycles) that are expected to have a negative impact on Arctic-nesting shorebirds. The majority of Arctic shorebird species, including the Semipalmated Sandpiper, tend to nest in vegetated sedge and grass tundra. This habitat type is expected to be pushed northward as the ameliorating climate permits shrub habitats to advance from the south. Similarly, a drying of tundra ponds is expected in many regions as the permafrost that kept the water at surface level melts. Most Arctic shorebird species depend on aquatic insects to feed chicks at hatch, so this habitat change will have a negative impact on both of AMBI's focal species.

It is conjectured that areas in the Arctic Archipelago, or other islands that are far from the mainland, will delay or avoid entirely incursion by shrub habitats. If this is correct, it would be prudent to ensure that high quality tundra habitats on islands that are generously supplied with a variety of water body types are protected as 'refugia' for graminoid tundra-breeding shorebirds. However, analysis that confirms the type and locations of such resilient habitats has not been undertaken in the North American Arctic.

**Action 1 Undertake an analysis that identifies the attributes and locations of shorebird habitats that are most likely to persist under future climate scenarios.**

There are analytical processes already developed to identify locations where Arctic habitats are likely to persist under future climate scenarios (e.g., the WWF's RACER program). AMBI will undertake an analysis specific to shorebird breeding habitats. The results of the analysis will feed into the habitat protection action, below.

**Action 2 Encourage the protection of large contiguous tracts of shorebird habitat, in parts of the eastern and central Canadian Arctic that are least susceptible to climate changes.**

Protection of habitat can come in a variety of forms, as part of legislated protected areas; zoning in land use plans; international non-binding designations; and protections enacted by Aboriginal groups on their private lands. AMBI will encourage work that determines the most appropriate protective mechanisms, in collaboration with Arctic landowners and stakeholders, and then support subsequent implementation of protective measures that are acceptable to landowners, co-management bodies, and government agencies.

The success of this action item is on a longer timeline than this workplan. Achieving consensus on land use and habitat conservation is not a quick process. In the short term, success will be measured by the robustness of identification of resilient habitats, and the communication of the results with regional landowners and other stakeholders. Ultimately, success will be measured by the amount of habitat that is protected, through legislation or other effective means, in a manner that is acceptable to regional landowners, co-management bodies, and government agencies.

**Action 3 AMBI will explore opportunities to conduct assessments that quantify the vulnerability of key sites for shorebirds on the north coast of South America to climate change, and recommend actions to mitigate and/or to adapt to these impacts. AMBI will facilitate transfer of the knowledge and recommendations to habitat managers at the relevant sites.**

Along the coast of northern South America, key shorebird habitats are liable to be negatively impacted by climate change-induced effects of sea level rise and increased intensity and frequency of coastal storms. However the magnitude and speed, at which these will affect shorebird populations, and effective mitigation measures, are not known.

The success of this action item will be measured by the completeness of the assessments, by the quality of the recommendations generated, and by the degree of transmission of information to habitat managers.

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### **Objective 3. Mitigate habitat impairment from human intrusions and disturbance.**

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The effects of human activity on shorebirds and their habitat are not high in the consciousness of many local communities or governments along the flyway. It is very difficult to engage in conservation discussion and action until all parties at the table have a common base of understanding and appreciation for the issues. AMBI has identified a clear and pressing need for key shorebird sites along the flyway to have a higher profile. This action is prerequisite to later actions regarding impact mitigation and best management practices for industry and development.

**Action 1 Communities and other partners associated with established Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) and Important Bird Area (IBA) sites will be encouraged to conduct site assessments to identify critical threats to the focal species, and develop strategies to mitigate these threats.** The results of these assessments will allow AMBI to prioritize actions related to hunting and habitat loss and degradation (below). In addition, formal linkages will be made among sites that share migrating shorebird populations to ensure range-wide conservation.

The success of this action item will be measured by the extent to which threats and drivers to shorebird habitats are understood, and by AMBI's ability to specify remedial actions that are needed; communities adjacent to important shorebird sites are aware of the attributes and vulnerability of the resource; and to the number of formal linkages there are between sites that host the same shorebird populations.

**Action 2 AMBI will cooperate with initiatives that document the scope of shorebird hunting at selected sites along the Flyway. This includes working with hunters to assess level of take (in countries with legal hunts) and using direct observation and indirect measures (e.g., number of registered firearms, quantity and species of birds sold in local markets) as an indicator of hunt level (in countries where hunting is illegal).**

There are serious concerns about the scope, composition and magnitude of the take; the level of awareness among hunters and enforcement personnel regarding legislation and protected species; and the lack of effective regulation. Background assessment work needs to be done to understand these factors, to enable identification of specific conservation issues and to propose conservation solutions.

There is clear evidence from a number of countries within the focal region that current hunting levels are not sustainable. In these cases, immediate action is required to reduce the take. Some of these actions (e.g., support for increased law enforcement activities in Suriname, acquisition and management of former shooting swamps in Barbados) have been identified in the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative and AMBI will work with this initiative to help support the implementation of priority actions.

The success of this action item will be measured by the completeness of harvest information that is gathered; by the accuracy with which the information can be used to identify conservation issues and propose conservation solutions; and by a measurable reduction in hunting activity where it is currently unsustainable.

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**Objective 4. Mitigate habitat destruction and degradation from development.**

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Both rice farming and shrimp aquaculture were identified as industries that have widespread effects on shorebird habitats in general, and increasingly so in northern South America. These farming activities can have both positive and negative effects on shorebirds, but magnitude of the effect depends on locations and farming practices. Currently, the extent of the impact is not clear because the locations of all farms have not been mapped and overlain with key shorebird habitat site locations. There is also a need to assess the exposure of shorebirds to contaminants used in shrimp aquaculture and rice cultivation.

**Action 1** AMBI will create maps showing the overlap of rice farms, shrimp farms, and key shorebird habitat sites in northern South America.

**Action 2** There are existing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for these activities elsewhere in the world, that could be adapted for this region. AMBI will make accessible searchable, accessible BMPs that are useful for rice cultivation and shrimp farming in northern South America. BMPs should take into account the potential exposure of shorebirds to harmful chemicals used in rice cultivation and shrimp farming, both in terms of type and application, and the timing of habitat use by shorebirds (e.g., for feeding, roosting, or both).

There are significant coastal development projects planned in locations along the northern coast of South America. Some of these are recipients of funds from development banks. The requirements of shorebirds and their habitats need to be considered in the planning stages. Accurate information must be available to developers and their financiers.

**Action 3** AMBI will work to ensure that key sites for shorebirds have been clearly identified and documented in publicly-available databases, that information on these sites is incorporated into development bank/multilateral agreement decision tools and environmental safeguard policies, and that the information is readily available to governments in the focal area and incorporated into development plans.

**Action 4** AMBI will work to obtain site designations (e.g., Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, Ramsar sites), and ensure that information about each site's characteristics and ecosystem services is transmitted to local and national governments.

The success of these action items will be measured by a) the number of designations of international significance that are obtained for relevant sites; b) the percentage of sites where funders and recipients are adhering to environmental safeguard policies; c) the number of development projects where shorebird habitat conservation need have been considered in planning or environmental assessment processes.

## Next steps

The purpose of this workplan is to focus attention on specific conservation issues and actions, in order to galvanize partnerships and funding. For the AMBI Americas workplan, we have assembled an ad-hoc 'committee of the willing' to develop the plan and to attempt to raise funds and implement action items going forward. This subcommittee of AMBI and the governance of AMBI generally, is expected to evolve as we move into the implementation phase. An invitation to join us is extended to experts, indigenous, local and scientific knowledge holders, and representatives from the southern portions of the Americas flyway, who have a desire to see AMBI's vision realized.

Each item in the workplan will be 'stepped down' with more detailed articulation of tasks, milestones, timelines, budgets and evaluation statements. Upon approval of the AMBI workplan by the Arctic Ministers (in April 2015), implementation will officially begin.

## Annex 1. Co-occurring Arctic shorebird species that will be aided by the AMBI Americas Workplan

\*not a complete list



Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*).



Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)



White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*)



Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)



Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*)



Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*)



Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)



Semipalmated Plover (*Pluvialis semipalmatus*)



Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)



Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)



Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)



Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)



Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)



Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)

## Annex 2. Multilateral agreements and initiatives in the Americas

Implementation of the AMBI Americas workplan will help governments meet their commitments under several regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements, in addition to contributing to the fulfillment of the goals of multiple voluntary initiatives. Some of the principal ones are listed below:

### **Migratory Birds Convention**

Responding to a number of high profile bird extinctions including the Passenger Pigeon and the Great Auk, governments from Canada and the United States came together to negotiate the Migratory Birds Convention, whose aim was to prevent the further loss of shared bird species. Signed in 1916, the convention has been actively conserving and protecting migratory birds ever since through parallel legislation on either side of the border (in Canada- the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* <https://www.ec.gc.ca/nature/default.asp?lang=En&n=7CEBB77D-1>, and in the United States, the *Migratory Bird Treaty* <http://www.fws.gov/laws/lawsdigest/migtrea.html>). In each country, it is unlawful to hunt migratory birds or destroy nests or eggs without a permit. Market hunting was the main threat to birds at the signing of the convention and to this day, the sale of migratory birds or parts thereof is generally not permitted. Harvesting of game birds is strictly controlled through a permitting process that is carefully monitored by binational committees along four waterfowl flyways. For nearly one hundred years Canada and the United States have been successfully cooperating on joint conservation and management activities through the relationship established by this convention.

More recently, the **North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)** and its joint ventures, and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative are examples of how successful collaboration continues. The **Arctic Goose Joint Venture (AGJV)**; [www.agjv.ca](http://www.agjv.ca)) is of particular relevance to the Americas flyway plan. It is a multi-agency partnership established under the NAWMP to further the scientific understanding and the management of North America's geese. It facilitates research and monitoring of Arctic goose populations and works cooperatively to provide a coordinated and cost-effective approach to meeting high priority information needs for the management of northern-nesting geese in North America. This partnership approach is especially valuable for conducting Arctic research where logistics are more costly and where maximum return from available funds is highly desirable. The AGJV cooperates on many surveys, banding and research projects with numerous organizations throughout the continent and other countries such as Russia.

### **Trilateral Committee and North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)**

The Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management (<http://www.trilat.org/about-the-trilateral>) was established in 1995 to more effectively address priorities of continental significance and boost the concerted efforts of the three countries of The North America bioregion. The Trilateral Committee is headed by the directors of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico (SEMARNAT).

The Trilateral Committee facilitates and enhances cooperation and coordination among the wildlife agencies of the three nations in projects and programs for the conservation and management of wildlife, plants, biological diversity, and ecosystems of mutual interest. The Trilateral also facilitates the development of partnerships with other associated and interested entities. Discussions take place under the auspices of working tables that report to an executive body comprising the heads of the three wildlife agencies. Delegations from each country come together annually for discussions on a wide range of topics, from joint, on-the-ground projects to issues of law enforcement to the development of information databases.

The NABCI vision is that populations and habitats of North America's birds are protected, restored and enhanced through coordinated efforts at international, national, regional and local levels, guided by sound science and effective management ([http://www.nabci.net/Canada/English/about\\_nabci\\_canada.html](http://www.nabci.net/Canada/English/about_nabci_canada.html)). It is designed to increase the effectiveness of existing and new programs, enhance coordination between organizations and foster greater international cooperation. The initiative will promote conservation programs comprised of regional partnerships that pursue biologically based landscape conservation.

In Canada, NABCI members include federal, territorial and provincial governments, conservation NGOs, private sector organizations, representatives from Habitat Joint Ventures, and partners from Canada's four major bird initiatives: **the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight - Canada, the Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plan** and the **North American Waterbird Conservation Plan**. Through cooperative planning and implementation, the partners will achieve their own goals, while helping make the vision of NABCI a reality.



### Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network

The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN; [www.whsrn.org](http://www.whsrn.org)) was launched in 1985 aiming to conserve shorebirds and their habitats through a network of key sites across the Americas. The Network aligns with the simple strategy that we must protect key habitats throughout the Americas in order to sustain healthy populations of shorebirds. To date, WHSRN site partners are conserving more than 32.2 million acres (more than 13 million hectares) of shorebird habitat at 90 sites in 13 countries, from Alaska in the north to Tierra del Fuego in southern South America. WHSRN works to:

- ▶ Build a strong system of international sites used by shorebirds throughout their migratory ranges.
- ▶ Develop science and management tools that expand the scope and pace of habitat conservation at each site within the Network.
- ▶ Establish local, regional and international recognition for sites, raising new public awareness and generating conservation funding opportunities.
- ▶ Serve as an international resource, convener and strategist for issues related to shorebird and habitat conservation.

### Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative

At the hemispheric level, one of the first calls for greater collaboration for the conservation of migratory species came from the environment ministers of the member countries of the Organization of American States, who agreed at the third Summit of the Americas in 2001 in Quebec City to develop a mechanism to come together to cooperate on shared species beginning with migratory birds. In response to this call, the **Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference** was held in Chile in 2003. This conference brought together wildlife agency directors, other senior government officials, and NGOs from throughout the hemisphere, and led to the development of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative, a non-binding cooperative mechanism to advance the conservation of shared migratory species (not just birds; <http://www.fws.gov/international/wildlife-without-borders/western-hemisphere-migratory-species-initiative.html>).

The plenary of the IV WHMSI Conference mandated a task force to advance “Integrating Migratory Bird Conservation Initiatives in the Americas”. The task force has since produced an action plan for the Americas, which formed one of the foundational components of the Americas Flyways Framework (see below).

### Americas Flyways Framework

The Americas Flyways Framework (AFF) is the result of collaboration between CMS and WHMSI to develop an overarching framework for migratory bird conservation in the Americas. The framework was adopted at the 11th Convention of the Parties to CMS, as part of the **CMS Programme of Work (PoW) on Migratory Birds and Flyways** ([http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Res\\_11\\_14\\_PoW\\_on\\_Migratory\\_Birds\\_Flyways\\_En.pdf](http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Res_11_14_PoW_on_Migratory_Birds_Flyways_En.pdf)). The PoW urges CMS Parties and signatories to CMS instruments in the Americas, and invited non-Parties, organizations and stakeholders to implement the AFF in collaboration with WHMSI to protect migratory birds and their habitats throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The AFF builds upon the five goals of the **CMS Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2014-2023**. The Strategic Goals of the AFF comprise both aspirations for conservation achievement at the hemispheric level, and a flexible framework for the establishment of national and regional targets. Governments and other stakeholders are invited to set their own targets within this flexible framework to advance the conservation of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere, taking into account the interconnectedness of migratory bird life cycles and also bearing in mind national contributions to the achievement of hemispheric targets.

### Ramsar Regional Initiative for the Integral Management and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs

This Regional Initiative ([http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-regional-initiatives-initiativesamericas/main/ramsar/1-63-478-543\\_4000\\_0\\_#3](http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-regional-initiatives-initiativesamericas/main/ramsar/1-63-478-543_4000_0_#3)) of the Ramsar Convention aims to develop a Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the conservation, management and wise use of mangroves and coral reefs. Among the initiative’s objectives are:

- ▶ To promote the generation and exchange of knowledge on the current status of conservation of mangroves and coral reefs in member countries, through inventories and ecosystem studies.
- ▶ To strengthen capacity and develop a regional approach for the conservation and wise use of mangroves and coral reefs.
- ▶ To promote the review, adaptation and harmonization of the legal framework, including national policies, to guarantee the protection and conservation of mangroves, coral reefs and associated wetlands.
- ▶ To manage mangroves, coral reefs and associated wetlands effectively by adopting an integrated watershed approach, including measures of adaptation and mitigation to climate change.
- ▶ To develop and strengthen communication, education, public awareness and participation (CEPA) in member countries to increase the visibility and awareness of mangroves, coral reefs and associated wetlands.
- ▶ To encourage, strengthen and disseminate basic and applied research, including traditional knowledge, socio-economic studies on mangroves, coral reefs and associated wetlands.

### Ramsar Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative

The Ramsar Convention's Caribbean Regional Initiative of Wetlands ([http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-regional-initiatives-initiativesamericas/main/ramsar/1-63-478-543\\_4000\\_0\\_#4](http://archive.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-regional-initiatives-initiativesamericas/main/ramsar/1-63-478-543_4000_0_#4)) seeks to facilitate the implementation of the Convention in the Caribbean, through the development of a Regional Strategy. The initiative includes the Contracting Parties of the insular Caribbean plus Belize and Suriname.

The main strategic and initial operational goal of the initiative has been the formulation of a **Regional Strategy to Implement the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean Sub-region** and its formal agreement by the Contracting Parties, non-Contracting Parties and other stakeholders. A secondary goal is the development of strategic interventions that can be implemented across the sub-region.

### Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative

In late 2011, shorebird conservationists began conceptualizing a strategy for shorebird conservation within the Atlantic Flyway. This resulted in the production of an **Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Business Strategy** (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/migratorybirds/shorebirdconservation.html>), a first phase business plan, representing a collection of priority activities needed to recover shorebird populations within the flyway. The second phase of development began with workshops in 2013 to engage shorebird conservationists in Latin American and the Caribbean. During 2014, and in coordination with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the strategy steering committee has used an Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation process to build a conceptual model of change and develop results chains using Miradi Adaptive Management Software. The AMBI Americas workplan has been developed in close coordination with the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative, to link complimentary goals, build synergies and ensure efficiencies of effort.

### Western Hemisphere Convention

The first environmental convention signed by multiple countries throughout the Americas was the "Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation in the Western Hemisphere", commonly known as the Western Hemisphere Convention. The Convention was adopted in Washington, D.C., in 1940 and entered into force on 5 May 1942. The Convention's stated objective is to preserve all species and genera of native American fauna and flora from extinction, and also to preserve areas of wild and human value. While some parties to the Convention (notably the USA) have enacted strong domestic measures to protect migratory birds, overall the Convention has barely been implemented. However, it does include a specific provision for the protection of migratory birds of economic or aesthetic value (Article VII), committing contracting parties to "adopt appropriate measures for the protection of migratory birds of economic or aesthetic value or to prevent the threatened extinction of any given species".

## Annex 3. Persons who have contributed to the development of this workplan by participating in the Montreal or Washington workshops

R. Ajisegiri	I. Davidson	I. Kaufman	T. Salathe
B. Andres	M. Djosetro	R. Lancot	P. Smith
J. Appiott	G. Donaldson	D. Lebbin	R. Smith
R. Atkinson	G. Gilbert	M. Loonen	E. Syroechkovskiy
Y. Aubry	D. Gremillet	W. Mansfield	I. Thaulow
T. Baldursson	W. Hagemeyer	M. Marissink	M. Thiele
T. Barry	D. Hahn	S. Millington	O. Tostain
H.C. Beng	G. Ibarguchi	D. Mizrahi	L. Wenzel
A. Black	L. Janishevski	P. Moss-Davies	C. Y. Yi
G. Butcher	M. Jeffrey	L. Neretin	D. Younkman
R. Clay	S. Johnston	R. Rodrigues	
N. Crockford	V. Johnston	K. Roy	
S. Dadrian	K. Kalasz	C. Ruiz	

Flyway	Objective	Action
Americas Flyway	Evaluate, and determine appropriate mitigations, to impacts of overabundant goose populations on Arctic shorebird habitat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct research that is designed to identify and quantify the magnitude and mechanism(s) of impact that white goose habitat destruction has on breeding populations of shorebirds, in particular Semipalmated Sandpipers, in the eastern and Central Canadian Arctic.</li> <li>2. Incorporate Inuit knowledge and advice into management recommendations.</li> </ol>
	Evaluate and determine appropriate mitigations to loss and shifting of shorebird habitat from climate change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake an analysis that identifies the attributes and locations of shorebird habitats that are most likely to persist under future climate scenarios.</li> <li>2. Encourage the protection of large contiguous tracts of shorebird habitat, in parts of the eastern and central Canadian arctic that are least susceptible to climate changes.</li> <li>3. AMBI will explore opportunities to conduct assessments that quantify the vulnerability of key sites for shorebirds on the north coast of South America to climate change, and recommend actions to mitigate and/or to adapt to these impacts. AMBI will facilitate transfer of the knowledge and recommendations to habitat managers at the relevant sites.</li> </ol>
	Mitigate habitat impairment from human intrusions and disturbance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communities and other partners associated with established WHSRN and IBA sites will be encouraged to conduct site assessments to identify critical threats to the species, and develop strategies to mitigate these threats.</li> <li>2. AMBI will cooperate with initiatives that document the scope of shorebird hunting at selected sites along the Flyway. This includes working with hunters to assess level of take (in countries with legal hunts) and using direct observation and indirect measures (e.g., number of registered firearms, quantity and species of birds sold in local markets) as an indicator of hunt level (in countries where hunting is illegal).</li> </ol>
	Mitigate habitat destruction and degradation from development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AMBI will create maps showing the overlap of rice farms, shrimp farms, and key shorebird habitat sites in northern South America.</li> <li>2. There are existing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for these activities elsewhere in the world, that could be adapted for this region. AMBI will make accessible searchable, accessible BMPs that are useful for rice cultivation and shrimp farming in northern South America. BMPs should take into account the potential exposure of shorebirds to harmful chemicals used in rice cultivation and shrimp farming, both in terms of type and application, and the timing of habitat use by shorebirds (e.g., for feeding, roosting, or both).</li> <li>3. AMBI will work to ensure that key sites for shorebirds have been clearly identified and documented in publicly-available databases, that information on these sites is incorporated into development bank/multilateral agreement decision tools and environmental safeguard policies, and that the information is readily available to governments in the focal area and incorporated into development plans.</li> <li>4. AMBI will work to obtain site designations (e.g., Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, Ramsar sites), and ensure that information about each site's characteristics and ecosystem services is transmitted to local and national governments.</li> </ol>



Photo: Jan van de Kam

**CAFF INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**  
**Borgir , Nordurslod**  
**600 Akureyri**  
**ICELAND**

Telephone: +354 462 3350  
Fax: +354 462 3390  
E-mail: [caff@caff.is](mailto:caff@caff.is)  
Website: [www.caff.is](http://www.caff.is)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CAFFS](https://www.facebook.com/CAFFS)  
Twitter: @CAFFSecretariat