

View from the Eyrie

Natural Selections Newsletter, Summer 2012

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As some of you may know, the DoD Partners in Flight newsletter, *Steppingstones*, will cease publication. Peter Boice wants to better integrate all aspects of the DoD Natural Resources Conservation Compliance Program, including communications and outreach, in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. Obviously, this is a classic case of “good news-bad news”. While we will no longer have a dedicated newsletter for bird conservation issues on DoD lands, we will now have a “Steppingstones Corner” within the *Natural Selections* newsletter. This will allow bird conservation stories to reach a larger audience, while hopefully providing the same level of updates on key policy and conservation issues related to birds. I hope that you will continue to provide inputs, articles, and photographs.

I was honored to receive the National Military Fish & Wildlife Association’s *Natural Resource Conservation Management, Model Programs* award at the March meeting (being presented to me by the much taller NMFWA President Rich Fischer). Awards like this are typically the result of many people working in partnership to make a program beneficial to all. This award is no exception. The energy, insight, and enthusiasm of natural resources professionals at military installations everywhere is truly inspiring. I feel privileged to be able to interact with people who are keenly aware of the connections in our natural world, and who work tirelessly to protect the resource and the mission. We—soldiers, biologists, civilians—are all indebted to your dedication. Thank you!



The DoD Partners in Flight program held its annual planning meeting in May at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The DoD PIF Reps have interacted virtually with Cornell scientists for a number of years through Legacy project proposals. It was rewarding to have the face time at this meeting to hear and see the great work of the Cornell Lab. We also had discussions about the Lab’s capability to support DoD’s mission in the future.

Monitoring was one of the key items for discussion during the week. The document *Coordinated Bird Monitoring: Recommendations for Military Lands* (previously called the Coordinated Bird Monitoring Plan) is now finished and is available at http://www.dodpif.org/legacy/07-246-CBM_Plan.pdf. Prioritizing species is always a challenge, but the DoD PIF Reps have almost finalized a list of mission-sensitive species for monitoring. The species on the list were considered to have the highest potential to negatively impact the mission if they become listed under the Endangered Species Act. Watch the DoD PIF listserv for information about the final list. We are also working with American Bird Conservancy, USGS, and Great Basin Bird Observatory to create a population estimates database for these species. The project uses habitat and landscape modeling techniques to provide a population estimate for any given installation for each of these species. This and the coordinated bird monitoring document break new ground

for mission and INRMP planning, and should give resource managers information that will allow them to more effectively and efficiently plan and implement monitoring programs.

And speaking of the DoD PIF listserve (DODPIF-L), you can sign up at <http://www.dodpif.org/>. If you are already a subscriber and have recently or soon will change your email address (especially those in the Army), make sure you sign up again with your new email address. As always, please contact me or any of the DoD PIF Reps if you have questions about bird conservation on military lands.