

Conservation Committee of the Waterbird Society

2013 Annual Report

Membership:

Chair: Jonathan Cohen (jcohen14@esf.edu); Co-Chair: Charles Clarkson (cec2p@virginia.edu);
Members: Jeff Spendelow (jspendelow@usgs.gov), Susan Elbin (selbin@nycaudubon.org), Nellie Tsipoura (nellie.tsipoura@njudubon.org), Mike Erwin (rme5g@virginia.edu), Ricardo Zambrano (ricardo.zambrano@myfwc.com), Jennifer Wheeler (jennifer_a_wheeler@fws.gov), Brad Andres (Brad_Andres@fws.gov), Katharine Parsons (katharineparsons@gmail.com)

2012-2013 Committee Activities:

From January to March 2012, the Conservation Committee worked with Double-crested Cormorant experts within its own ranks and the Society at large to craft a public comment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal for renewal of federal cormorant depredation permits. The comments were submitted to Council for approval, after which they were subject to a further round of revisions based on Council comments. They were then approved and submitted to the USFWS. The position of the Society, in summary, was that depredation permits should not be renewed primarily due to inadequate monitoring of their effectiveness and effects on DCCO populations while the permits have been in effect.

In August and September, the Conservation Committee drafted a letter to Panama's Minister of the Environment outlining the concerns held by The Waterbird Society surrounding proposed development projects in and around Tocumen International Airport. The impact of these projects to the shorebird and waterbird species using the area for foraging and nesting was perceived to be great and it was the suggestion of the committee that a study of impact be conducted. The letter was submitted for approval by the council and revisions were incorporated. On 9 September 2012, the council approved the letter and it was mailed to the Minister of the Environment. A copy of the letter was also posted to the homepage for The Waterbird Society and to a discussion forum on Ornithology Exchange.

The Committee also initiated a discussion with the program chair for the 2013 annual meeting, with the aim of sponsoring a conservation-themed symposium. The consensus of the committee regarded a symposium on chemical contaminants and their relevance to waterbird conservation. There was little interest in generating a special publication from this symposium.

The committee also drafted and submitted for comment two letters pertaining to novel awards offered by the society for conservation based work. The first of these letters supports an award for the best conservation publication in the journal *Waterbirds* and the second proposes an award for the best conservation themed student poster/presentation at the annual meeting.

2013-2014 Proposed Work of the Committee:

The Waterbird Society Conservation Committee proposes continued work towards the creation of an annual publication award for "Most Significant Contribution to Waterbird Conservation" as well as an award for the best student poster or oral presentation in the area of waterbird conservation given at the Waterbird Society annual meeting.

We propose that the following steps be taken toward this end:

- 1) The Conservation Committee develops criteria for the award subject to final approval by the Council.
- 2) The Conservation Committee solicits nominations from the general membership, review and rank the nominated papers, and submit a recommendation for the awardee to the Council for approval.
- 3) The award be bestowed at the time of The Waterbird Society annual meeting in the form of a travel grant to the meeting, an invitation to present the awardee's paper in one of the meeting sessions, and a certificate presented at the banquet.

Requests for Council Action: