

Black-capped Petrel Working Group Meeting
Jolly Beach, Antigua
18 July 2009

***Immediate Action Items in Red with Asterick**

Participants

Elena Babij – eleonora_babij@fws.gov – USFWS –Lead for BCPE conservation plan
Fernando Simal – washingtonpark@stinapa.org – STINAPA Bonaire.
Niels Larson – nlarson@rossmed.edu.md – Ross University School of Medicine,
Department of Biochemistry
Matt Jeffery – mjefery@audubon.org International programs for Audubon
Jeremy Madeiros – cahowman@yahoo.com – Department of Conservation Services Bermuda.
Jorge Brocca - jbrocco@soh.org.do – Ornithological Society of Hispaniola & Zoodom.
Stefani Melvin Stefani_Melvin@fws.gov - USFWS Florida and Caribbean Program
Jim Goetz james.e.goetz@gmail.com – Work in DR and Haiti on BCPE
Jennifer Wheeler - Jennifer_a_wheeler@fws.gov – USFWS Waterbird Coordinator
Catherine and David Lowrie - dave@listalite.co.uk – Working with Environmental
Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) on Lesser Antilles.
Jean Vilmond Hilaire – jvhilaire@audubonhaiti.org – Societe Audubon Haiti.
Phillipe Feldman – phfeld@sfr.fr - AEVA (NGO on Guadeloupe)
Anthony Levesque - anthony.levesque@wanadoo.fr – Amazona (NGO) and Wildlife
Agency of Guadeloupe
Floyd Haynes – floyd_haynes@yahoo.com - Pacific Union College
Kirsty Swinnerton – Island Conservation
Brad Keitt brad.keitt@islandconservation – Island Conservation

Introduction to Workshop

There has been lots of interest and work conducted on this species for many years. The FWS now has some funds to dedicate to a particular species. This provides an opportunity to have Elena Babij as a lead facilitator for the working group. This will involve collecting information and ensuring it is available to everyone, facilitate work being conducted in various focus teams and ensuring networking, and developing a strategy on the BCPE from information provided by the working group.

Quick introduction to Species

The only proven sites are Haiti and Dominican Republic. Other potential and/or historic sites include Cuba, Dominica, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Jamaica, St. Croix and Crooked Island (Bahamas).

***Check facts regarding likelihood of low elevation breeding (Elena)**

Report from the At Sea Meeting

A brief synopsis was provided to the group of an at-sea meeting held at Cape Hatteras June 16 – 18. Full meeting notes are available on the BCPE Website. Certain action items were identified during this section of the meeting:

Atlantic Seabird Project

***Share information about the Atlantic Seabirds (O'Connell) project with group (will be posted on the BCPE working group website)**

Climate change

***There needs to collaborate with other side of Atlantic. We can learn a lot from the UK efforts) (Elena – will coordinate with individuals looking at climate change)**

Wind

***When Addressing Wind farm issues in Caribbean, include:**

- **Work with the RSPB/Wind Farm folks. Also Mike Dolton with Audubon who is working on wind issues throughout the Western Hemisphere. Also Genevieve Thompson (Audubon, FACA Chair; expand project)**
- **Look at Danish data (Danish Ornithological Society)**
- **Must get ahead of the planning! Bermuda examples of how knowledge of Cahow influenced wind farm planning**
- **Science should drive planning for wind energy – science of at sea distribution lacking.**

Brief Presentations

Jeremy Madeiros

There has been 50 years of work on the Cahow starting with work by David Wingate. The Cahow is definitely affected by invasive species (rats). Four chicks were lost to one rat in five nights. There is a grid pattern of rat bait boxes on all breeding islands.

The issue of habitat loss was solved by using artificial burrows. Petrels from around the world are drawn to complexes. Global warming resulted in seven instances of overwash and loss of nesting islands, including the largest population. Luring and relocation actions are ongoing. This is a good first step.

Political recognition and buy-in was hugely important. This was done by making the Cahow the National Bird. Outreach was a priority. Three Government Ministers visiting Somers, the “poster chick.” There are good relations with newspaper staff.

? Would this work in other countries...? And who?

Tagging has applicability to foraging mysteries. Geolocator tags gives location and water temperature but must be retrieved. This works on small Cahow and has not shown to have any effect on behavior. The tags are placed on the Cahow's leg and do not seem to get in the way. Geolocators are ¼ price of satellite tag. There have been some amazing results with the use of these tags on the Cahow. Some went north of Bermuda and some went to the edge of the ice pack near the St. Lawrence! Four thousand miles was the longest distance recorded. The BCPE and the Cahow forage in the same area off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and these findings may be clues to other areas where the BCPE go.

Was there any international recognition? Has the U.S. Endangered Species Listing helped?

Jeremy: There is a Military base agreement. There has not much international engagement. Birdlife provides venues for sharing and getting the science out. Australia/New South Wales Parks and Wildlife is the closest thing to a partner. They provided a place for Jeremy to train. It was a strange partnership that just arose because of an Australian visitor to Bermuda. Victor Carlisle has come and helped. Serendipity.

*** David and Catherine Lowrie willing to add new techniques to their cruises. They are going to Dominica.**

***Connect with Frank Zeno and the Madeira Petrel (amateur working on Gadfly petrel... get in touch with them...lots of experience (Jeremy has contact information). Contact the international Pterodroma research community**

***Reach out to Australia/New South Wales Parks and Wildlife on artificial burrows**

Jim Goetz's Recent Work

The work is looking at goals (basic research, conservation hurdles) and methods (logistics, night-time listening, mist-netting, nest searching).

In Loma del Toro, Jim heard a couple of BCPE each night, possibly six? It is really difficult to figure out how many petrels are calling. Ideas for possible techniques in distinguishing the number of petrels include radar and imaging. The National Park is fairly well protected. Could possibly try artificial nests in this area. Ted Simons found a nest. Maybe a male waiting for his mate.

Camera deployed and automatic recording device.

The Macaya site is very remote. In 2005, Jim was with Chris Rimmer and John Gerwin but it was not really a legitimate survey although one bird was heard. They haven't been back to this site. It was too hard to get to in 2008 and 2009.

La Visite – This is a forested area that was extensively used by a lot of people. Wood is used to make plaster for construction. There is a steep escarpment where listening surveys have been conducted along the top of the cliff. Birds may aggregate and call away from nest site.

***Jeremy has information about Cahow calling he will share.** He found that single birds never call. Cahows only call in the air. Should consider using other techniques. Recordings – hard to assess sonograms.

***Use Haleakala data on the Hawaiian petrel to make inferences?**

People everywhere are still eating the bird. However, fewer people are eating the bird now (probably because it takes a lot of work to get to them). Techniques used to capture the bird include the use of fire and to poke into burrow.

Other locations – not heard.

Dominica – rumors.

A lot has been learned about petrels, habitat, about people (see Jim Goetz's paper posted on website).

Solutions?

-There must be Ecosystem Services or some benefit to the people.

-Don't make poor people pay

Jean Vilmonde's Ideas

Both Macaya and LaVisite are in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA).

It is important to collect information, but that doesn't save the bird. The forest is completely surrounded by the community (in the park). There is a degraded perimeter and forest. Steepness doesn't protect the bird. As important as new data is, there is a need to intervene to reforest and recover the area. Reforestation would probably help with cutting down invasives. Logistics are really tough – better to have a regional program that would take data over an extended period of time.

There is a need to combine research and restoration.

Local projects – help to improve the income of people by substituting crops (like onions), use them for restoration, use endemic/native plant species (NOT the same as agroforestry – e.g., with exotics). Remember the other birds in the area...trogon and crossbills need the same habitat (endemic plants). Birds could help as dispersers of seed. Need to look at both the birds and the people.

There is forestry in the lowland areas too. Projects are at various elevations... there are a number of different interests/projects. Again, don't use the term agroforestry (commercial and exotics – for further extraction).

In any species-specific conservation plan it needs to be clearly stated that habitat restoration and management are needed to help petrel.

***Additional location to research... (Haut Borgne in north Haiti) 19 48.27,70 North, 72 31 01.92 W**

***Visibility – Consider BCPE as flagship for LaVisite, maybe emblem for Biological Corridor**

Other ideas:

***Make sure any research ties into public education**

***Long term strategy of Bird Tourism with the Black-capped petrel as an attraction.**

Discussion Notes

Particular Interests:

Matt – Two interns from Haiti? We need to continue with youth/capacity building programs.

Kirsty – We need to work with other petrel folks.

***Lots of contacts (cross check with Kirsty's contacts) e.g., Paul Scofield
We need to pull together the Pterodroma Community**

ACAP – Policy

***see how this may intersect with what we are doing here (Elena).**

Invasives – eradicate small islands as restored breeding sites.

***Brad Keitt to write a proposal for some islands in the Caribbean to present.**

***Piggyback on other At Sea programs – e.g., Phillipe, perhaps train the whale watchers around French Antilles**

Education – In Macaya, work must include the schools, peasants, Audubon Haiti.

Strategy to Improve Youth:

- Jorge: Best training for students is by working with partners.
- Elena – Pursue a regional conservation program for youth?
- Jorge – Bring instructors/experts/researchers to build programs, mentor students. Develop agreements with different universities. Get the experts to come train the trainers.

Jean Vilmond – Chris Rimmer trains 4 people where he contacts the students directly. Jean would prefer a strategic approach which matches the training to the needs/strategy.

Strategy for Surveys of Possible Breeding Sites

***Another contact: Matthew LeCoure dealing with similar issues to French Antilles (very inaccessible terrain) using techniques with recorders
(Elena will get from Kristy)**

Strategies to Support Haiti

Two existing programs in LaVisite: look at these and see if can be expanded/supported for BCPE needs.

BCPE working group needs to know what is going on with habitat conservation in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. There is a recent feasibility study for LaVisite working with Seguin and funded by Birdlife.

***Share LaVisite feasibility study with the group
(Elena will check with David Wege)**

USAID Watershed project WINNER

Need to get something now. \$115 M on the line

***Would help to get letters of support/SCSCB – Multiple letters**

Strategies to Support D.R.

Lomo del Toro National Park - Grupo Jaragua is managing KBAs in this area and there are numerous organizations willing to work on this. Currently, rat studies underway and they are finding them in the pines where the BCPEs are. There could be some eradication around the pines.

Artificial Burrows - Jorge thinks it may be good to try these out somewhere else like Alto Vuelo or Beata Island.

Strategies to Support Invasives Work in the Region

New islands - Brad would like to see if BCPE group could support IC's plans for invasives removal. There are still questions that need to be examined

Do we agree these habitats?

Would we support social attraction/burrows following eradication?

Working Groups

Artificial Burrows: Jorge and Floyd Hayes interested in joining this group

DNA: Niels is interested in working with this group.

Information exchange: Elena

Visibility, credibility, and legitimacy are the KEYS