

Boreal Partners in Flight / Alaska Raptor Group

2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

8 December, 2015

Anchorage, AK



E-mail listserv: Contact Hilary Cooke (hcooke@wcs.org) to be added to the BPIF listserv, which provides periodic announcements on topics related to BPIF and other relevant landbird issues in Alaska and northwestern Canada.

Visit the Alaska Landbird Resource Information System, the official website of Boreal Partners in Flight: <http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/bpif/index.php>

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INTRODUCTION

The 24th annual meeting of Boreal Partners in Flight was held on 8 December 2015 in Anchorage, Alaska. This year's meeting was attended by over individuals representing a variety of state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities —members appeared in person, or attended remotely from across Alaska and boreal Canada. In addition to BPIF business and focus group discussions on, this year's meeting included a variety of presentations on research and monitoring activities going on throughout the boreal forest.

In summary, we:

- (1) Discussed how we'd like to use the new BPIF Google Group and member database
- (2) Learned about the Alaska Raptor Metadata Database, which can now be accessed through the USGS BPIF website
- (3) Engaged in focus group sessions the Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan and Tree Swallow Nest Boxes
- (4) Received updates on: monitoring efforts for landbirds (ALMS, BAM), Raptor Stoops species action plans, and aerial insectivore projects
- (5) Identified action items for the upcoming year, summarized in the "Action Plan for 2016" section

This report contains the minutes from the meeting, brief notes on topical discussions, and recommended actions for 2016. Unless noted, Co-Chairs are responsible for the completion of action items.

We offer our thanks to attendees for their participation, and extend an invitation to all who are interested in the conservation and research of northern landbird populations to join Boreal Partners in Flight (contact Gwen Baluss).

Kristin DuBour

Secretary

18 March 2016

LEADERSHIP OF BOREAL PARTNERS IN FLIGHT

Executive Committee

Gwen Baluss – Chair

Term: Nov 2014 – Dec 2016

U.S. Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, AK 99801
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Garrett Savory -- Co-chair

Term: Dec 2015-Dec 2017

Directorate of Public Works
ATTN: INFW-PWE (G. Savory)
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Phone: Office: 907-361-9689, Cell: 907-957-0128; Email: garrett.savory@colostate.edu

Jim Johnson – USFWS Landbird Coordinator

Term: ongoing

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird Management
1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 786-3423; E-mail: jim_a_johnson@fws.gov

Colleen Handel – USGS Landbird Researcher

Term: ongoing

U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: (907) 786-7181; Email: cmhandel@usgs.gov

John Shook – Alaska Raptor Group Chair

Term: Dec 2014– Oct 2016

ABR, Inc. -- Environmental Research and Services
PO Box 80410
Fairbanks, AK 99708
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John Haddix – At-large Elected Member

Term: Nov 2016 – Nov 2018

Directorate of Public Works

ATTN: IMFW-PWE, 1060 Gaffney Road, #4500, Fort Wainright, AK 99703

Phone: (907) 361-4213; E-mail: john.a.haddix.civ@mail.mil

Caroline Van Hemert – At-large Elected Member

Term: Dec 2015 – Dec 2017

U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center

4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: (907) 786-7181; Email: cvanhemert@usgs.gov

Hilary Cooke – At-large Elected Member

Term: Dec 2015 – Nov 2017

Wildlife Conservation Society Canada (WCS Canada)

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Kristin DuBour – Secretary

Term: Dec 2016- Dec 2018

USFWS, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge

PO Box 779

Tok, AK 99780

Phone: 907-883-9410; E-mail: kristin_dubour@fws.gov

BCR Coordinators (2014–2016)

BCR 1: Jim Johnson (jim_a_johnson@fws.gov) and Steve Matsuoka (smatsuoka@usgs.gov)

BCR 2: Kristine Sowl (kristine_sowl@fws.gov), Melissa Cady (melissa_cady@fws.gov)

BCR 3: Travis Booms (travis.booms@alaska.gov)

BCR 4: Julie Hagelin (julie.hagelin@alaska.gov)

BCR 5: Matt Moran (mattmoran@fs.fed.us)

Standing Committees (formed in 2012, ongoing)

Education: Tricia Blake (tricia.blake@aksongbird.org), Lynn Fuller (lynn_fuller@pcjv.org)

Management: Cheryl Carrothers (ccarrothers@fs.fed.us)

Monitoring: Colleen Handel (cmhandel@usgs.gov), Steve Matsuoka (smatsuoka@usgs.gov)

ACTION PLAN FOR 2016

ALMS Data Portal

- **Action 1:** Colleen is looking for input into the new data portal for Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey data. Contact Colleen.

Alaska Raptor Metadata Database

- **Action 2:** Increase submissions of historical records into the database with a goal of enabling online searches. Please enter your historical raptor data and encourage others to do so. The Alaska Raptor Metadata Database can be accessed via the USGS Landbirds BPIF website or you can Google it. To enter the site, you will need a username: **chris** and password: **raptors**.

Alaska Raptor Group Website

- **Action 3:** Send links, citations and photos for the new ARG website (hosted on the USGS Landbirds page) to Laura_Phillips@nps.gov

Proposed Short-eared Owl Surveys

- **Action 4:** Please report any Short-eared Owl nests found in Alaska to Travis Booms or Jim Johnson. They are beginning work on a project investigating SEOW responses to recent burns.

Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan

- **Action 5:** Colleen Handel asked for help with 1) providing photos for the plan and 2) money for printed plans. Photos needed include: a) highway crossing, b) population center, c) wildfire, d) transmission lines, e) Barred Owl, e) Northern Shrike, f) Olive-sided Flycatcher and g) high resolution logos. She is looking for funding for printed copies of the plan. If you would like some, contact Colleen. Copies will be 120 pages, full color and \$20-25 each. The goal is to have them printed by end of December 2015.

PRESENTATIONS

Updates from Boreal Canada

Lessons Learned: Community Structure, Cumulative Effects and SAGD Impacts on Boreal Landbirds in the Oil Sands Areas of Alberta - Lisa Mahon

This project looked at ecological niche of boreal birds using a large dataset compiled by BAM. They found: 1) 22% of upland and lowland boreal species are specialized and very sensitive to disturbance; 2) declining population trends for 9/15 species. The study looked at a suite of 28 landbirds - disturbance models were top models for 21/28 species (incorporated natural disturbance into models as well). 8.4 - 9% disturbance on landscape, predictive impacts on birds: significant change (20%) in predicted densities, 15% shift in landbird community, generalists replacing specialists, deciduous and open habitat species increasing, boreal species decreasing. Multi-stressor systems (2d/3d seismic, wells, roads, pipelines) are present in the oil sands. Question: How are birds being impacted by these multi-stressors? She suggests moving away from looking at individual stressors and start thinking about interactions and how they are occurring. She mentioned publication that will focus on Palm Warblers and Dark-eyed Juncos including information on territory placement, space use, foraging patterns and reproductive activities.

Bank Swallows on the Yukon - Pam Sinclair

Bank swallows were listed as threatened in Canada in 2013 due to declines (98% over 40 years using BBS roadside data). Bank Swallows use artificial and natural habitats. In the 1930s, 20% of nests were in road-cuts but that has declined with changing road building techniques. In the 1970s, sand and gravel pit reclamation has occurred and, more recently, gravel pits have been reduced so that less artificial habitat is available. Nesting ecology in natural habitats is not well known. Three years ago pilot work began on swallows looking at distribution and abundance in the Whitehorse area. They found 1) colony size and persistence of colonies in natural habitats; 2) 70-80 colonies in 50 km stretch with 16,000 burrows; 3) of approximately 80 colonies about ½ were active in any given year. They asked the question: Are these burrows persistent given bank erosion? Now they're analyzing videos from 2013-2015 to get a sense of burrow reuse, how long swallows use a colony, etc. Future work will include looking at use of artificial sites across Yukon to assess population distribution and abundance more broadly in the territory.

Colleen Handel commented that BBS data in Alaska indicates a decline in Bank Swallows as well.

Summary of 2015 Activities of PNR- Northern Region Landbird Program in BCR 6 – Samuel Hache

Landbird Program of Canadian Wildlife Service. Objectives: Conserve migratory bird populations and monitor status of landbird populations to ensure species conservation. Will have trend estimates from 20 years of data for ~50 species in 2017. Three current monitoring programs: 1) Post-fire: hardly any anthropogenic disturbance in Northwest Territories so focusing on the response of landbirds to large-scale natural disturbances – specifically looking at fire disturbance and severity at multiple spatial scales; 2) Winter roads: Three main roads between BCR 6 and BCR 7 which provides a nice transition area – deployed 10 song meter units along roads to document spring arrival; 3) Edehzhie Landbird Monitoring Program expected to start in 2016: will use a systematic approach with 33 sampling stations using song meter units for monitoring. They asked the question: Can song meters enhance BBS data? Additional projects: Deployed geolocators on four Olive-sided Flycatcher (OSFL) individuals – want to quantify habitat quality for OSFL. Also capturing Canada Warblers and looking at phylogeography across their breeding range.

Yukon Bird Observatories Update – Ben Schonewille

Goal: Promote awareness of migratory birds through research and education. Monitoring protocols: all data separated into standardized and non-standardized with allowances for poor weather. Methods include using mist-netting, census, and visual migration counts encompassing daily estimated totals. Stations located at Teslin Lake, Albert Creek in SE Yukon and McIntyre Marsh in Whitehorse. Showed graphs with total numbers for top species banded in 2015. In 2015, Yukon's first recorded Blackburnian Warbler showed up and Teslin station's first recorded Black-and-white Warbler showed up. Tennessee Warblers have also increased at Albert Creek station possibly due to more local breeders than migrants.

Using Member Database & Google Group to Enhance BPIF Partnership – Hillary Cooke

This is an initiative to increase connectivity between biologists who study boreal birds. It has increased participation from Canadian biologists. She gave update on member database: Used a survey website for BPIF members to participate in and provide information about their fields of interest. In December 2014, Canadian membership included 30 people from 8 provinces and territories. As of December 2015 there is a total of 114 people in database (USA=81, CAN=33). BPIF Google Group has increased members from 150 to 206 from 2014-2015. A spreadsheet passed around at beginning of meeting will gather info for new contacts.

Q: How do we want to use the Google Group?

A: An attendee suggested that members select for different levels of participation.

Q: Do we want to elect to receive more or less emails depending on individual preferences?

A: Probably ... Colleen Handel suggested setting up different Google groups that were smaller; Attendee stated that it was nice to receive emails to stay up on what people are working on. There was general consensus on this. The group would like to still receive information and be allowed to delete the emails on an as-needed basis. Everyone can post to the Google Group – Julie’s recommendation is to try to post things on your own and if it doesn’t work then forward info to a Co-chair to do it for you; Gwen will look into setting up a simple Google Drive link where presentations from today, etc. can go.

Q: How do we want to use the Member Database (intention was to let people have more info about folks involved with the group)? – Currently can access database through a link that was sent out in an email through the Google Group

Studying Boreal Birds Throughout Their Range: Various Presentations

Impacts of Climate Change on Habitat Quality of Focal Bird Species in Eastern Boreal Forest – Junior Tremblay

Overview of climate change and birds. Objective: use FLM to estimate impacts of climate change, with the Black-backed Woodpecker (BBWO) as a focal species. Gave an overview of study area, methods, statistical model used (LANDIS-II) and stand process parameterization (PICUS). Considered five BBWO habitat types used in LANDIS-II. Results focused on temporal/spatial trends in habitat quality, specifically landscape (i.e., forest stand) composition and biomass change. Threats to eastern boreal forest include: post-fire salvage logging pressure, climate change. Next steps: increase study area, work at community level, include networks of protected areas and model critical habitat of species at risk.

Radio Telemetry & Habitat Use of Wintering Yellow Warblers – Simon Valdez

Began with background on wintering distribution, habitat, field methods. Used Bayesian analysis to determine breeding origin (200 different locations identified). Discovered habitat segregation by age and sex. Discussion centered on winter habitat use strategies, differences in home range size by age and sex, threats to agricultural areas (pesticides, tree loss) that Yellow Warblers are using in winter. Females and young birds are generally in the more agricultural habitat, and the habitat is larger, presumably because it is of poorer quality.

Olive-sided Flycatcher Studies Update – Julie Hagelin

There has been a steep decline (76%) in OSFL populations in 40 years with at least half of that in the last decade. In 2015 a recovery strategy was published by Environment Canada looking at mismatch between

insect availability and breeding. Research conducted since 2013 is trying to identify migratory route of OSFL's using geolocators and PinPoint GPS units. Have recovered 11 geolocators from first 2 years (side-note: no birds showed signs of injury from geolocators). Gave overview of how geolocators work. Showed kernel density estimate data for three OSFL's. A SGAT Method based on Bayesian framework was used to analyze geocator data. Next steps: recover more geolocators, deploy more PinPoint GPS units.

BPIF BUSINESS

Gwen Baluss is soliciting project reports for next BPIF Annual Report. The 2014 report was just sent out via email. The USGS Landbirds website still being worked on. Meeting notes from current meeting will be compiled and placed on that website eventually.

Elections: Garrett Savory elected as co-chair (replacing Julie Hagelin), Kristin DuBour as secretary (filling a vacant position). Caroline Van Hemert re-elected as At-large. John Haddix was unable to attend meeting but Executive Committee will contact him and he will be appointed to continue as at large if all agree. (This happened in the weeks following the meeting).

BCR Coordinators will remain the same for BCR 1,3& 4. In BCR 5, Matt Moran named to replace Melissa Cady; in BCR 2 Melissa Cady will work as co-coordinator with Kristine Sowl.

Announcements: Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan 2.0 - Colleen Handel has made copies for folks to take home of different BCR's that state goals and objectives. She suggests we start thinking about high-priority issues and what we want to accomplish. BCR update: a few edits to finish, looking for photographs (specifically photos of a) highway crossing, b) population center, c) wildfire, d) transmission lines, d) Barred Owl, e) Northern Shrike, f) Olive-sided Flycatcher and g) high resolution logos. The goal is to have them printed by end of December 2015. She is looking for funding for printed copies of the plan. If you would like some, contact Colleen. Copies will be 120 pages, full color and \$20-25 each.

ALASKA-CENTERED DISCUSSIONS

2015 ALMS Update - Colleen Handel

Began with summary of survey effort and sampling scheme. Primary objectives: monitor population trends and model distribution of landbirds. Talked about comparative analysis of ALMS and Alaska BBS data and listed species with declining or increasing trends – noted that similar trend information coming from the two different surveys but some AK trends are different from continental BBS trends. Next steps:

working toward a single model that combines both surveys, increase sample sizes to monitor trends, working with AXIOM data company in Anchorage to create a portal that will be available online displaying landbird distributions. Asked for volunteers to offer input about this database.

Modeling Avian Abundance and Distributions - Courtney Amundson

Briefly mentioned involvement with two projects: 1) Evaluating ALMS data from AK Peninsula and 2) Project working with Tongass NF ALMS data looking at population trends related to timber harvest and management.

The Boreal Avian Modelling (BAM) Project - Steve Matsuoka

Started with overview of BAM and the data that it comprises. Objective: model distribution and abundance of boreal forest birds using point count data that varies by protocol. Collaborating with UAF on a landscape change model.

Update on ADF&G Wildlife Diversity Program & State Wildlife Action Plan - Chris Krenz

Gave brief background of State Wildlife Action Plan: a plan that sets priorities for species with conservation needs. Draft plan completed in August 2015 and went out for review – plan then submitted in October 2015 (copy available for attendees to read at meeting). It is very important for groups like BPIF to help figure out what the priorities in this plan should be.

Tongass & Chugach Forest Plan Revisions - Cheryl Carrothers

Described what a forest plan is and the five components involved. Revision started with an assessment of existing information in the plan based on 15 topics; defined species of conservation concern and noted that the FS must have confirmed presence of a species in an area in order for it to be listed as a species of conservation concern. Data has been compiled from various organizations to get a ranking list of species of conservation concern. Started with Chugach NF assessment in 2012 – draft plan will be out on December 18, 2015 and will be expecting final decision within the next year. The Tongass NF is going forward with only an amendment to the plan and not a revision. draft amendment is out right now. Old planning rules will still apply. Addressed focal species monitoring questions in Chugach NF draft. There are currently no avian species serving as focal species. Touched on the importance of outside groups like BPIF providing comments/feedback on draft plans.

Question from attendee: What if we appointed a BPIF person that could provide comments on FS plans? Gwen could possibly compile comments but suggested instead that all members provide individual letters if they prefer because that would provide more letters and input.

ALASKA RAPTOR GROUP

ARG Overview – John Shook

ARG is always looking for new members; attendees can contact jshook@abrinc.com if they would like to become a member. ARG has a future goal of estimating the total number of Golden Eagles in AK. HawkWatch International will be providing counters to monitor the spring raptor migration from March-May 2016 at Gunsight Mountain. Gave an update on cliff-nesting raptor surveys that took place in the central Alaska Range.

Raptor Stoops (Species Action Plans) – Steve Lewis

Raptor Stoops is a species action plan that identifies issues of concern for each raptor that breeds in AK. Current tasks include: 1) Review draft on the Gyrfalcon; 2) Complete drafts for Golden Eagle, Snowy Owl, and Short-eared Owl; 3) Figure out how to incorporate Canada. They are looking for raptor photos for the web site.

Proposed Short-eared Owl Surveys – Jim Johnson & Travis Booms

Plans are in the works to follow up on the recent Kenai burn with focused Short-eared Owl surveys (and other owl spp.) to investigate their responses to a recent burn. Reporting of any Short-eared Owl nests found in Alaska is a priority and to please report SEOW nests if you find them.

ARG Website Updates – Laura Phillips

The ARG website is now hosted on the USGS Landbirds BPIF page. Please send links, citations, and photos to add to Laura_Phillips@nps.gov

Alaska Raptor Metadata Database – C. Barger

The Alaska Raptor Metadata Database can be accessed via the USGS Landbirds BPIF website or you can Google it. To enter the site, you will need a username: **chris** and password: **raptors**. Future directions

include increasing submissions of historical records into database with a goal of enabling online searches of the database.

NOTES FROM BCR BREAKOUTS, AND ALCP 2.0 DISCUSSION

BCR 1

- Identify what contaminant studies have been completed or are already in progress. Identify how species-specific contaminant studies identified as action items can be tied to work already being conducted or to samples that have already been collected. Example: the USFWS Anchorage Field Office is working on a project to synthesize contaminants information within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (AMNWR) and the Aleutian and Bering Sea Islands Landscape Conservation Cooperative. The effort takes advantage of broad constituent interest to design a new “contaminants mapper” database in partnership with the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) as well as the State of Alaska’s Departments of Environmental Conservation and Health and Social Services and the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. Is this an opportunity?
- Risk to land birds from oil spills was identified as a conservation concern. Recommend reviewing the existing Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil & Hazardous Substance Discharges/Releases (Unified Plan), specifically Annex G which addresses wildlife protection guidelines in AK, so ensure land birds are adequately addressed. To see the wildlife response guidelines, click on the provided link (<http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/PPR/plans/uc.htm>) and then click on Annex G. Suggested changes to the plan could be coordinated through Lori Verbrugge at USFWS.
- Pursue a proposal to get funding for McKay’s Bunting studies – several study topics are outlined in the plan (e.g. nest boxed, high risk from contaminants, and effects of colorizations red foxes).
- Involve AMNWR to find out what they are currently doing with landbirds. If some surveys/ species are lapsing, see where other agencies/ groups can do to add support.
- Get together with Tamara Zeller (Migratory Bird Management, USFWS) and Crystal Leonetti (USFWS Native Liaison) from the USFWS to identify contacts for future landbird work on Saint Lawrence Island. Is there a local contact and what is the Native Corporation interested in pursuing? If there is interest pursue identifying an on-island Principle Investigator to support the work
- Re-engage AMNWR in PIF and find someone to facilitate the relationship.

BCR 2

- Encourage the public to comment on the Donlin EIS
- Request the BPIF comment on the Donlin EIS (send request to the executive committee)
- Find out more about the Port of Nome project and potential impacts to landbirds – is there concern? If so, develop comments, best management practices, and recommendations as appropriate.

- Improve relationships between the USFWS, ADFG, and others to ensure knowledge is provided to strengthen avoidance and minimization measures provided by the regulatory agencies. This will: 1) ensure better environmental assessments; 2) help develop and implement best management practices; and 3) support monitoring along transportation corridors.
- BLM is developing new mitigation and reclamation plans – figure out how to be involved with this effort to help landbirds in terms of minimizing impacts and post-mining recovery
- Review spill response plans to ensure landbirds are protected by the current response plan (see similar bullet above from BCR 1).
- Evaluating the YK Delta McKay’s Bunting data to see if we can estimate survival rates or determine if more sampling is needed for an adequate sample size.
- Develop a proposal for funding to determine McKay’s Bunting winter distribution data.
- Develop community program for phenology data – a citizen science program if appropriate.

BCR 3

Group limited their discussion to specific items in the updated ALCP, which will be reflected in that final product, discussed above.

BCR 4

New/Emerging topics:

1. Justin Smith: Ft. Wainwright: Rusty Blackbird surveys in remote access areas of DOD lands near Fairbanks. Tanana Flats. Will also be picking up point counts including OSFL.
 - i. Project goals: Look at natural system modifications—burns, long term monitoring.
 - ii. Donnelly Training area: Post fire interest/studies.
 - iii. Habitat association studies. (3m accuracy imagery)
2. RUBL: sightings in eBird. Outreach to media and Audubon.
 1. Marian—help with outreach to community and reporting sightings via protocol.
3. Kanuti did 12pt ALMS plots (6 burned, 15 plots total): Subset of plots have burned 2004-5. Revisiting some of those plots post-burn via ALMS protocol, including vegetation—about ½ plots burned. Funded by FWS fire program.
4. BLM: Action Item #3: Standardizing system for habitat restoration post disturbance for mines/placer mines. Consistent results and monitor outcomes. Better data. Proposal done in Feb.
5. IBA’s: Audubon—Land-based models for IBA’s. Making progress ID’ing IBA’s for interior, land and coastal. Using IBA protocol. Not heavy on songbirds. Based on survey data.

What important issues to tackle—realistic action items for this year:

1. Important longer-term project I: Tanana River Corridor is important—migration study—replicate ABR study: raptors and songbirds. —IBA?

Goal 1: ID a few good locations using resources—Tetlin and other locations?

2. Priority species: to ID—near human areas/disturbance or away from them

Goal 2: Public outreach: EBird Data—getting word out of where birds are in our region.

3. Important project II: Some kind of standardized insect surveys—people or agencies could collect. Develop a way forward. Declines due to insect interactions—or decline in food insects?
 - a. Biomass of bugs from an area. Use this as baseline of “ambient bugs”. Compare with blood of birds in that area?
4. Important Project 4: Are the past data on landbird observations important?

Goal 3: Compiling historical bird survey. AK-wide survey. Record them somewhere? E-bird?

5. Current Projects that address needs from plan:
 - i. Habitat Association: RUBL, OSFL
 - ii. Snags/cavity nesters, work with DNR to minimize wildlife impact.

BCR 5

- 1) Tongass issues
 - a. Monitoring/studies in young growth, on beach fringes, old growth reserves and riparian. Focus on Brown Creeper, Marbled Murrelet, and Queen Charlotte goshawk.
 - b. Trans boundary mine concerns over accidents. Should model potential affects.
- 2) Comments from BPIF on Tongass Land Management Plan revision and Chugach National Forest Planning a
 - a. See above
 - b. Retention of old growth reserves
- 3) Other issues
 - a. How often should we do barred owl surveys. (Species is expanding range, and may affect other species)
 - b. Mining is expanding
 - c. Infrastructure recommendations in ALCP

Action item: BCR 5 participants to draft letter regarding Tongass and Chugach Planning, to be approved by the EC. Noted that USFS employees should avoid any conflicts of interest and other agency or non-affiliated partners should take the lead.

DISCUSSION OF TREE SWALLOW NEST BOXES IN ALASKA (POST-MEETING FOR THOSE INTERESTED)

Tricia Blake Alaska Songbird Institute shared updates on the Alaska Swallow Monitoring Network. The project goal is to connect and strengthen existing efforts to study Tree Swallows in communities throughout Alaska and develop new community based research sites. This is a partnership with multiple entities. Including University of Alaska and ADFG. Contact her at ASI for more info.

Discussion then went to a round robin, members discussed various projects statewide and the need for discussion, and coordination on data collection and sharing. There may be as many as a thousand swallow boxes either up now or planned with various projects around Alaska. Fort Wainright alone has 260 boxes!

Swallow boxes provide ample opportunities for citizen science and important research on aerial insectivores. However, for monitoring, it will be important to establish minimum number of nest boxes and level of effort. Briefly discussed the Golondrinas (<http://golondrinas.cornell.edu/>) protocols, recognizing that this may not be practical for some entities. Discussion left off before other options could be explored further.

Group agreed to start an informal boreal Tree Swallow working group for AK and neighboring NW Canada. Names were taken for an email group or listserv. (Post meeting, the google group “Boreal Tree Swallows” hatched. Over 20 BPIF members have joined the group. Contact managers Gwen Baluss gbaluss@gmail.com or Tricia Blake tblake@aksongbird.org to request being added to the list).

UPDATES ON 2015 ACTION ITEMS

Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative

- **2014 Recommended action 1:** “BPIF should apprise Rick of any specific ideas germane to IMBI that pertain to conservation of migratory Arctic landbirds.”
- **Action taken:** R. Lanctot affirmed that no further action was needed by BPIF at this time.

Increasing Connections

- **2014 Recommended action 2:** “Hilary Cooke will continue conversation with smaller group to identify “next steps” with newly expanded membership. What is the best way to move

forward across boreal north America to develop strategies, maintain active members and collaborations?”

- **Action taken:** Hillary Cooke set up a BPIF Google Group. As of December 2015 there is a total of 114 people in database (USA=81, CAN=33). The Google Group has increased members from 150 to 206 from 2014-2015. It has increased participation from Canadian biologists.
- **2014 Recommended action 3:** “BPIF will create and share (with permission) a membership database with information to help identify potential connections/collaborators amongst membership.”
- **Action taken:** Hillary created a member database. She used a survey website for BPIF members to participate in and provide information about their fields of interest.

Alaska Raptor Metadata Database

- **2014 Recommended action 4:** “Rick Lanctot, Luke DeCicco, and Julie Hagelin will work with Chris Barger to devise a possible means of applying online data entry as a means of submitting an annual project report for our respective bird groups (Alaska Shorebird Group, Boreal Partners in Flight). An update will be provided next year.”
- **Action taken:** Chris Barger made the Alaska Raptor Metadata Database accessible via the USGS Landbirds BPIF website. To enter the site, you will need a username: **chris** and password: **raptors**. Future directions include increasing submissions of historical records into database with a goal of enabling online searches of the database.

Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan

- **2014 Recommended action 5:** “Colleen Handel needs help from BPIF to (1) find funding for printing the Landbird Conservation plan and (2) know how many copies to print”
- **Action taken:** The Landbird Conservation plan is almost complete. Printing is planned for the end of December 2015. Contact Colleen if you’d like a printed copy.

Aerial Insectivores

- **2014 Recommended action 6:** “Audrey Taylor recommended those currently involved in swallow efforts establish some overarching data goals.”
- **Action taken:** Efforts are underway to assemble a Tree Swallow or aerial insectivore working group. Those involved in such efforts plan to continue communication in 2016. (see above).

BPIF Business

- **2014 Recommended action 7:** “BPIF elections for 2015:
 - Elect co-Chair

- Elect two (of three) Executive Committee member
- Appoint a Secretary.
- Elect BCR Coordinators.”
- **Action taken:** Elections were held for open positions. See above.

APPENDIX 1. MEETING AGENDA

08:30-09:00	Welcome, Announcements, & Introductions	Gwen Baluss & Julie Hagelin BPIF Co-chairs, All
	Updates from Boreal Canada	
09:00 - 09:15	<i>Lessons Learned: Community Structure, Cumulative Effects, and SAGD Impacts on Boreal Landbirds in the Oil Sands Areas of Alberta</i>	Lisa Mahon, Canadian Wildlife Service
09:15-09:30	<i>Yukon Bank Swallows: distribution, occupancy and persistence of nesting colonies</i>	Pam Sinclair, Canadian Wildlife Service, Whitehorse
09:30-09:45	<i>Summary of the 2015 activities of the Prairie and Northern Region North Landbird program in BCR 6</i>	Samuel Haché, Canadian Wildlife Service Environment Canada Yellowknife, NT
09:45-10:00	<i>Yukon Migration Monitoring Stations Update</i>	Ben Schonewille, Society of Yukon Bird Observatories
10:00-10:20	<i>Utilizing the Updated Member Database and Google Group to Increase Information Sharing Within BPIF</i>	Hilary Cooke, At-large Executive Member, All
10:20-10:30	Break	
	Studying Boreal Birds Throughout Their Range: Various Presentations	

10:30-10:50	<i>Impacts of Climate Change on Habitat Quality of a Focal Bird Species in Eastern Boreal Forest</i>	Junior Tremblay, Environment Canada Quebec & Yan Boulanger, Natural Resources Canada, Quebec
10:50-11:10	<i>Radio Telemetry & Habitat Use of Wintering Yellow Warblers</i>	Simon Valdez, Simon Fraser University
11:10-11:30	<i>Olive-sided Flycatcher Studies Update</i>	Julie Hagelin, Alaska Dept. Of Fish and Game
	BPIF Business	
11:30-12:00	Elections (*See below) and Housekeeping, Next Annual Report	Chairs, All
12:00-13:00	Lunch	
	Alaska-centered Discussions	
13:00-13:30	<i>Alaska Landbird Monitoring System and Survey Update</i>	Colleen Handel, USGS-BRD
13:30-13:40	<i>Introduction and update from Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game Threatened, Endangered and Diversity Program</i>	Chris Krenz, ADF&G
13:40-14:00	<i>Tongass and Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan Revision</i>	Cheryl Carrothers, US Forest Service, Alaska Region
14:00-14:15	Break	
14:15-15:15	Alaska Raptor Group • ARG overview (John Shook)	ARG John Shook, ABR, Inc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raptor Stoops (Steve Lewis)</i> • <i>Proposed effort: Short-eared Owl (and more?) surveys in recent burns (Jim Johnson)</i> • <i>Website updates (Laura Phillips)</i> • <i>GIS metadata project updates (Chris Barger)</i> 	<p>Steve Lewis, US Fish and Wildlife Service</p> <p>Jim Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service</p> <p>Laura Phillips, National Park Service</p> <p>Chris Barger, Alaska Dept. Fish and Game</p>
15:15-16:10	BCR Breakouts, Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan 2.0 Discussion	All
16:10-16:15	Summary Comments	Executive Committee*
16:15-17:00	<p>Discussion of Tree Swallow Nest Boxes in Alaska</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations: Audrey Taylor, Tricia Blake • Sharing and QA from other participants • Establish data goals • Form informal working group for continued networking 	<p>Audrey Taylor, University of Alaska, Anchorage</p> <p>Tricia Blake, Alaska Songbird Institute</p> <p>Those interested in Tree Swallow nest box programs**</p>
		**others can leave meeting at 16:15

APPENDIX 2. MEETING ATTENDEES (INCLUDES DIAL-UP PARTICIPANTS)

Name	Affiliation
Colleen Handel	USGS
Caroline Van Hemert	USGS
Deb Nigro	BLM
Cheryl Carrothers	USFS
Lucas DeCicco	USFWS
Gwen Baluss	USFS
Kristin DuBour	USFWS
Audrey Taylor	UAA
Chris Barger	ADF&G
Stephen Lewis	USFWS
Melissa Gabrielson	USFS
Nathan Walker	Audubon
Chris Harwood	USFWS
Lynn Fuller	Pacific Coast Joint Venture
John Shook	ABR Inc.
Matt Kirchhoff	ADFG
Travis Booms	ADF&G
Tricia Blake	Alaska Songbird Inst.
Steve Matsuoka	USFWS
Jim Johnson	USFWS
Julie Hagelin	ADF&G
Kristine Sowl	USFWS
Hilary Cooke	WCS- Canada
Jeff Mason	3 PPI Consulting
Laura McDuffie	ADFG
Courtney Amundson	USGS
Rachel Richardson	USGS
Nick Docken	USFS
Sarah Thompson	USGS

Chris Krenz	ADFG
Beth Peluso	Audubon AK
Diane Granfors	USFWS
Ellen Martin	CEMML
Kim Jochum	CEMML/CSU
Justin Smith	CEMML/CSU
Erin Cooper	USFS
Matthew Moran	USFS
Herman Griese	Griese Wildlife Consulting
Jessica Ilse	USFS
Bonnie Bennetsen	USFS
Jack Ruggirella	USFS
Junior Tremblay	Environment Canada
Samuel Hache	CWS
Steve van Wilgenburg	CWS
Ben Schonewille	Society of Yukon Bird Observatories
Melanie Flamme	NPS
Casey Burns	BLM
Melissa Burns	USFWS
Simon Valdez	Simon Fraser Univ.
Lisa Mahon	CWS
Rick Lanctot	FWS
Pam Sinclair	CWS
Susan Oehlers	USFS