



## **A Workshop on the Monitoring, Research, and Management for Northern Forest Birds (BCR 12)**

MARCH 4 – MARCH 6, 2015,  
Marquette, MI

### **Reason for and purpose of the workshop**

The purpose of this workshop was to generate interest for and build a coordinated partnership whose vision is to provide leadership and guidance in monitoring, research, and management actions to ensure thriving, diverse northern forest bird communities across the boreal hardwood transition zone (Bird Conservation Region 12).

### **Main themes/topics**

Workshop participants were first introduced to the [Midwest Coordinated Bird Monitoring Partnership](#), this [Northern Forest Birds Working Group](#), and the [Midwest Avian Data Center](#), as well as how these efforts interconnect. The leaders and invited speakers presented on three main topics in order to set the stage and to generate interest for this Working Group:

- A review of bird conservation and monitoring efforts throughout Bird Conservation Region 12;
- Identification of best practices for monitoring northern forest birds; and
- Case studies on successfully managing for diverse northern forest bird communities.

After each topic, workshop participants divided into small groups to provide input on questions or ideas posed by the leaders on how to best define this Working Group, such as defining its geographic scope, selecting a group of focal species, identifying knowledge gaps, choosing best monitoring practices, integrating or combining existing monitoring programs, and addressing key management questions.

### **Major decisions and recommendations from the group**

Overall, participants expressed great interest in the formation and continuation of this Working Group and were excited to meet others who are also involved with bird conservation in this region. They generally agreed that this Working Group should focus on forest birds as well as the United States-portion of the boreal hardwood transition zone (BCR 12), at least at first, while still seeking collaboration with Canadian partners. They identified current knowledge gaps in bird conservation, such as the effects of climate change on birds, managing for birds throughout their full annual cycles, and how different land ownerships and management strategies affect birds. Participants identified important best management practices that this group could use, like the [Birder Certification Online](#) tool, [The Northeast Bird Monitoring Handbook](#),

connecting bird conservation directly to land management, and identifying shared goals. Lastly, they recognized the importance of communication as being the key to the success of this group.

### **Next steps/where this effort is headed**

On the last day of the workshop, participants were asked to identify project ideas that could be accomplished by group members during 2015-2016. They suggested the following projects and leaders:

- 1) Construction of a decision tree to assist with monitoring protocol selection (Tom Will by December 2015);
- 2) Creating a list of existing monitoring projects within BCR 12 (Katie Koch by September 2015);
- 3) Generating a list of focal species that are not well monitored (Skye Haas by September 2015);
- 4) Identifying shared monitoring needs and objectives that would benefit from enhanced collaboration (BCR 12 Steering Committee, date to-be-determined);
- 5) Developing a bibliography of BCR 12-related bird monitoring papers (Rich Staffen, date to-be-determined); and
- 6) Specifying different roles for organizations within the Working Group.

They also suggested the following next steps:

- Finalize and distribute workshop materials and talking points (Katie Koch and Erin Giese);
- Investigate partnering with Canada (Tom Will);
- Reach out to others who were unable to attend this workshop but who might be interested in joining the partnership; and
- To keep this effort alive, they suggested that the group hold regular conference calls and webinars.

### **How leadership can help?**

Workshop participants suggested that this Working Group have a memorandum of understanding in place to help form a task-oriented Steering Committee consisting of equal representation across multiple states, agencies (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), and organizations (e.g., The Nature Conservancy, universities). The Steering Committee will guide this Working Group through regular meetings, maintaining a focus on bird conservation and monitoring, and encouraging the sharing of data and resources. Katie Koch, Erin Giese, Dave Grosshuesch, Peg Robertsen, Dr. Bob Howe, Gary Palmer, and Skye Haas have volunteered to participate on an interim team to form the Steering Committee for this Working Group. Eventually this effort could be led by a coordinator.

