



SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION AND STUDY OF CARIBBEAN BIRDS
WESTERN HEMISPHERE MIGRATORY SPECIES INITIATIVE PROJECT
*Implementation of a Training Activity on Monitoring Waterbirds in
Caribbean Protected Areas for Adaptive Management and Public Education*
CARIBBEAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (CWC) TRAINING WORKSHOP
23 - 27 February 2011 – Summary Report

SCSCB is working towards establishing the **Caribbean Waterbird Census (CWC)**¹, a region-wide waterbird and wetland monitoring program². The **goal of the program** is to promote conservation of resident and migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats in the insular Caribbean through monitoring.

The **objectives of the CWC** are to:

- Promote inventories, surveys and censuses of waterbirds and their habitats in all Caribbean countries
- Encourage broad-based participation in waterbird counts including NGOs, governmental agencies, institutions, communities and volunteers
- Ensure that as many internationally and nationally important wetland sites as possible are conserved and monitored
- Increase awareness of conservation issues related to wetlands and waterbirds and what can be done to address these issues.

Twenty-two participants from 14 Caribbean islands took part in the SCSCB's five-day CWC Training Workshop, held at the Bahamas National Trust in Nassau, Bahamas 23 -27 February 2011. The participants were prospective national and site coordinators for the CWC. They included wildlife professionals and protected area managers employed by governments and NGOs, and volunteers, all of whom share a common interest in learning monitoring methodologies to more effectively conserve and manage migrant and resident waterbirds and their habitats.

The newly-launched CWC takes place annually, with participants being asked to count waterbirds using standard methods at least once a year in January. This will provide information on important overwintering sites for migratory waterbirds, as well as resident species. Counts at other times of the year are strongly encouraged, particularly during fall and spring, to identify the critical stopover sites used by migratory waterbirds to “refuel” during their long migrations between breeding and wintering areas. Greater knowledge and awareness of the most important sites can aid in efforts to protect these sites.

The workshop provided equipment, materials and training in implementing the CWC, including how to design and implement surveys, levels of monitoring and CWC protocols³, identification of waterbirds, count

¹ The CWC arose from discussions at the SCSCB's previous monitoring training workshop “**Long-term Bird Monitoring in the Caribbean – Why, What, Where and How?**” which took place in Nassau, Bahamas in February 2009. It is a part of a regional bird monitoring program called *Caribbean Birdwatch*. For more information: <http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/caribbeanbirdwatch>

² The Caribbean region will join Wetland International's global program of wetland bird monitoring, with data from the Caribbean filling a major gap in the coverage of the International/Neotropical Waterbird Census. It can be used to promote site conservation, assess impacts of climate change and other threats, and design programs to protect, manage and restore wetlands.

³ The CWC offers a hierarchical and flexible approach to monitoring (employing levels of monitoring) that enables the user to choose the protocol and extent of participation in the program that is best suited to their objectives, available resources and capacity. The basic CWC protocols (Level 2 – area search and point count) include measures of detection probability, which are essential for accounting for bias in monitoring.

training tools and habitat monitoring, field sessions to practice survey methods, data entry and analysis and presenting results to decision-makers. Participants were also guided in the development of projects and preparation of proposals to implement monitoring on their islands. A day was dedicated to a discussion of how can we increase awareness and engage more people in birds, monitoring and conservation via a new strategy for citizen science; a draft strategy for SCSCB was prepared as an outcome from the discussions. SCSCB has received funding for a small-grant program to support participants in the 2010 program and eleven projects have received assistance. SCSCB is seeking further funding for 2011-12.

The eight facilitators and presenters included Richard Huber (Organization of American States), Jeff Gerbracht and Jennifer Fee (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, New York), Ken Kriese (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, DC), Lynn Gape (Bahamas National Trust), Sheylda Diaz-Mendez (SCSCB, Puerto Rico), Ann Haynes-Sutton (Monitoring Coordinator, SCSCB, Jamaica) and Lisa Sorenson (President, SCSCB, Boston).

The participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the workshop and committed to share their experiences, train others in their islands, and participate in the CWC. To facilitate this process all the materials from the workshop (including presentations and the CWC Manual) have been placed on the CWC ConserveOnline website (<http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/cwc>) where they are available for download. SCSCB hopes to offer additional training workshops and welcomes participation by all countries in the CWC.

The workshop was the main output of a project called *“Implementation of a training activity on monitoring waterbirds in Caribbean protected areas for adaptive management and public education,”* which was funded by the Organization of American States through the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI). Additional funding and support were provided by the US Forest Service, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Optics for the Tropics, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, Bahamas National Trust, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and others.



Participants at the SCSCB CWC Monitoring Training Workshop,
February 23 - 27, 2011, Nassau, Bahamas



Participants gather for the morning's training presentations about monitoring, The Retreat, Bahamas National Trust Headquarters.



Practice point count at Harrold and Wilson Ponds National Park – wintering home to Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, Common Moorhens, American Coots, Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitchers, Least Grebes, Pied-billed Grebes, Sora, and more.



Birding at the South Beach tidal flats – Piping Plovers and other shorebirds abound.



Checking bird ID on the field trip to Harrold and Wilson Ponds National Park:
Ken Kriese (USFWS), Atoya George (BVI) and Darren Henry (Tobago).



Predensa Moore (Bahamas) and Adams Toussaint (St. Lucia) go head to head in the *Name that Bird!* team competition on the last day.



Team Osprey looks on anxiously as one of their teammates compete in the *Name that Bird!* Team competition.



Birding at The Retreat, Bahamas National Trust Headquarters.



Playing the BirdSleuth Survival game on the bird education-citizen science day.



Field trip to Bonefish Ponds National Park – a wonderful mangrove wetland – home to many waterbirds and nursery for marine fisheries.



Bonefish Ponds gazebo: Ann Sutton explains habitat monitoring to the participants – filling out the Site Description Form, habitat covariates and IBA threats monitoring.



Field trip to Bonefish Ponds National Park – a wonderful mangrove wetland – home to many waterbirds and nursery for marine fisheries.



Farewell Dinner at East Villa Restaurant: Workshop trivia quiz, awards and presentation of certificates to all participants. Maureen Milbourn (Jamaica) and Lisa Sorenson (Boston).