

Partners in Flight (PIF) Ontario
DRAFT Terms of Reference
PIF Ontario Technical Advisory Committee

September 2003

Committee Mandate

To provide technical advice and guidance on conservation planning for landbirds in Ontario. Specifically, the Committee will focus on guiding the development of biological plans for landbird conservation in each of the four BCRs in Ontario.

Background

Partners in Flight (PIF) is the landbird conservation component of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). **PIF's Mission is to sustain the distribution, diversity and abundance of landbirds throughout their natural geographic ranges.** The mission is typically expressed through three related concepts:

- **Keeping common birds common.** Native birds, both resident and migratory, must be retained in healthy numbers throughout their natural ranges.
- **Helping species at risk.** Species must be conserved before they become imperiled. Endangered species must be protected from extinction and recovered.
- **Working in partnerships for birds, habitats and people.** Conservation of landbirds and their habitats cannot be undertaken alone.

A partnership of government and non-government agencies produced a bird conservation plan for Ontario in 1995, published as the Ontario "Flight Plan" in 1997. Priority species lists for Ontario were subsequently produced in 1999.

In 2003, an agreement was reached whereby Bird Studies Canada (BSC) will write landbird conservation plans for each of the four Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in Ontario, under the supervision of the Ontario Region Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The PIF Ontario Advisory Committee will provide the necessary guidance for these plans.

Planning initiatives for the three other Ontario bird groups (waterbirds, waterfowl and shorebirds) are in place or in progress. It is anticipated that conservation plans for landbirds and other birds will be implemented in a coordinated way through joint ventures involving many partner organizations.

Governance

Committee Composition:

The Committee includes representatives of the Ontario Region Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and other agencies / groups that support the PIF Ontario purpose, and wish to be actively involved in landbird conservation planning by committing to the roles described below. Members are free to limit their involvement to just those BCRs in which they have an express interest. A contact list of Committee members will be updated and replaced as members change.

Committee Roles:

- Evaluate and agree on methods and scores for biological assessment of landbirds, selection of priority species, focal species and habitats;
- Evaluate, discuss and agree on methods for defining population objectives for landbirds in Ontario, and for determining habitat (or other) targets;
- Organize and lead technical aspects of workshops designed to generate broader input from other interested parties;
- Review draft BCR biological plans, and any reviews of these plans, and reach consensus on underlying assumptions, presentation of technical material, strategies and recommendations for action;
- Link PIF landbird planning to other relevant conservation plans and initiatives in Ontario and neighbouring jurisdictions;
- Advise on communications materials for PIF Ontario, on partnership-building and fund-raising in support of the program, and on opportunities/strategies for implementation of landbird plans in the context of joint ventures and other initiatives.

Committee Chair:

The Committee will be chaired at least initially by representative(s) of CWS and/or MNR, and subsequently determined by members of the Committee.

Meetings:

The Committee will meet regularly by teleconference, and approximately semi-annually will meet in person and/or at technical workshops (or more frequently if necessary and acceptable to members).

Re-assessment of Committee:

As biological plans near completion, attention will shift to implementation. It is anticipated that conservation plans for landbirds and other birds will be implemented in a coordinated way through joint ventures / partnerships involving many interested organizations. The roles, membership and need for a PIF Ontario Technical Advisory Committee will be reassessed at that time.

PIF Ontario Contacts:

CWS and/or MNR will designate a person(s) as the official contact for Partners in Flight Ontario, to serve as the main point of contact for groups or individuals wanting information about the Committee or about the PIF Ontario program in general. (Listed in Attachment B)

BSC will designate person(s) as the points of contact for technical information and for information on, or input to, the biological plans (see Attachment B).

Other Governance:

Individual agencies continue to be solely responsible for their own funds and programs, treating Committee input as advisory and voluntary. In particular, CWS and MNR will continue to have final responsibility for directing BSC efforts under the BSC/WHC agreement for writing the biological plans.

Some landbirds have been officially designated as species at risk according to federal or provincial endangered species legislation, and recovery plans for them are in place or underway. PIF Ontario landbird planning will not attempt to duplicate or revisit those plans, instead using a complementary approach to extend conservation measures to other species.

PIF Ontario contacts:

Overall contact / general information:

Brigitte D. Collins
Program Development Biologist
Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Region
49 Camelot Drive, Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3
Ph: (613) 952-2408 Fax: (613) 952-9027
Email: brigitte.collins@ec.gc.ca

Plan-writing contact:

Steve Wilcox
Administration and Development Manager
Bird Studies Canada / Études d'Oiseaux Canada
P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0
Ph: (519) 586-3531 Fax: (519) 586-3532
Email: swilcox@bsc-eoc.org

Technical contact:

Peter Blancher
PIF Scientist
Bird Studies Canada / Études d'Oiseaux Canada
49 Camelot Drive, Nepean, ON K1A 0H3
Ph: (613) 954-1253 Fax: (613) 952-9027
Email: peter.blancher@ec.gc.ca