AMBC Community Science & Marine Bird Health Break Out

2023 Notes

October 9, 2023, 1:15 PM – 2:45 PM

Meeting Attendees: See attendees spreadsheet available on website –

Two people became new WG members!

**1. Introduction (5 minutes)**

**2. Draft a Mandate (15 minutes)**

The group discussed goals and objectives. We generated a draft mission statement, to share for comment prior to next monthly WG call

*‘Our working group’s mission in the western North Atlantic is to enable effective seabird conservation in the face of threats to avian health (e.g., emerging diseases, marine debris). We aim to pool community science resources and our collective knowledge to provide critical information and support for those working with marine birds.’*

*This group’s current focus is on:*

* *Exploring the potential for community science apps (e.g., iNaturalist) for identifying and tracking marine bird mortality in the northwest Atlantic.*
* *Facilitating information exchange related to emerging seabird diseases (e.g., HPAI) or other threats to avian health (e.g., marine debris).*
* *Collating resources that relate to working and managing seabirds on a landscape that now includes Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.*
* *POSSIBLY: Facilitating*

This draft has been circulated via email with WG members and will be discussed at the next meeting (Nov 15); then the WG profile on the AMBC website will be updated.

**3. Improving the Value of Meetings (15 minutes)**

Members stated that they found the meetings useful as they currently are. Others provided ideas for how to improve value e.g., inviting talks or discussion topics via email or asking specific people at the end of each monthly meeting.

• Suggestion to add a ‘README’ file to the WG’s Google Drive to help members navigate was accepted.

• Suggestion to add link to Google Drive to the AMBC website & to restrict Google Drive access to ‘members only’ was accepted and has been acted on.

**4. Initiatives (30 minutes)**

**• iNaturalist Beached Bird Project**

This WG was originally established to administer SEANET, a community science beached bird survey program, whose use has declined substantially in recent years and does not have full time data management capacity.

We discussed the barriers to using iNaturalist as a reliable source of mortality information and how we could overcome them. There are two ways. One involves reaching back out to the app developers and asking them to add attribute data to the phone app. The other involves outreach to communicate to iNaturalist users how they can report dead birds *properly*. The Task Group has created a PDF describing this.

Available here: http://atlanticmarinebirds.org/downloads/iNat\_How\_to\_report\_dead\_birds\_properly\_english\_CAN\_USA\_Nov2023.pdf

The suggestion to post this on the AMBC website was accepted and has been acted on.   
  
**• HPAI Resources Initiative:**

The group discussed whether the existence of this resource and its contents should be disseminated further, given the limited capacity of people currently engaged to maintain and organize.

Two new WG members stepped forward to assist! Once this resource has been fully organized, the task group leading this initiative will meet to discuss sharing this with the CMS/FAO Scientific Task Force on AIV. Folder-sharing settings may need to be revisited.

**• New Initiative: Dead bird/sample swap:**

There was strong support for the idea of facilitating the exchange of bird carcasses/samples (identify users and providers). There was some discussion about the information that would be important to include in a spreadsheet, including a provider/user’s capacity to handle or pay for transportation logistics. One member suggested this could include any samples from live birds or their nests.

Initially, a single question will be added to the membership survey to identify people who have/want dead birds or samples.

**5. Survey for Broader Membership (20 minutes)**

We discussed the purpose and importance of gathering input from the broader membership on topics discussed in this breakout session (goals & objectives, improving meetings, initiatives). A survey will be drafted and circulated before Christmas.

**Re: Increasing membership:** A new member asked whether we advertised our WG at all or if it was strictly word of mouth.

Volunteers to take responsibility for sending an email advertising our group to others. Suggested that after the membership survey is completed and the website is updated, the WG discussed how to spread the word about our group. Also, set up a way for Caleb to ensure all WG members are on the AMBC Listserv if they opt in. Suggestion accepted.