

Reddish Egret Working Group

Committee Chairperson Quarterly Call

August 13, 2018



Purpose of Call – Chairpersons of the four Reddish Egret Working Group (REEG-WG) committees provided updates on committees’ activities, coordinated on shared-activities, and provided feedback regarding the overall activities/direction of the WG. The committees (planning, research and monitoring, communication and habitat management) were formed during the WG’s annual meeting in January 2018. Quarterly, one-hour calls were started in spring of 2018 to provide a consistent communication venue. This was our third call. We also included the newly formed role of liaison between Central America and the WG.

Attending (committee leader and the Committee they chair): Clay Green (Planning), Samantha Collins (Research and Monitoring), Lianne Koczur (Communication), Jonathan Moczygemba (Habitat Management), Kelli Stone (WG leader). John Van Dort (Central America liaison) was not able to participate – primarily because we have not yet secured a toll-free phone line or other efficient way for him to participate.

Notes: By Kelli Stone (kelli_stone@fws.gov; 505-248-6515). Notes from quarterly calls will be posted on REEG WG webpage and/or shared with the WG as a means to keep everyone in the loop on committee activities, etc.

Please contact committee chairperson if you are interested in serving on a committee. These committees are most effective if there is representation from every state/region throughout the species range. See Table 1 for a list of committee members.

Next Call: November 13, 10-11 am Central.

Jonathan – Habitat Management (jonathan_moczygemba@fws.gov).

- Sent email to entire WG inviting/encouraging people to join the committee; he has gotten feedback already from people wanting to join the committee.
- Trying to get at least one person from each area of the range (i.e., each US and Mexican State, country, etc.).

Lianne – Communication (liannekoczur@gmail.com). Working on getting REEG website translated into Spanish. John Van Dort is providing translations.

- She has updated many portions of the website – added pictures, etc.
- Is updating the master list of current working group members (in Excel format). It is available in the Google Drive established for WG Committee Chairpersons – to get the link again, contact Lianne or Kelli.
- Lianne and Kelli talked with Aimee Roberson (Rio Grande Joint Venture) about “Partners Connect” software. The RGJV will use this communication platform to connect its partners; the REEG-WG could use it as well to connect members. We are exploring this idea further. Thank you to Aimee and RGJV for your willingness to share this communication tool with us.
- Paying for the REEG webpage. It is about \$300 a year. Clay Green paid it for several years out of his own research/grant funds. Last year, Bart Ballard paid it (thank you!). It is due August 28, 2018. Andrew Cox is looking into his ability to have his agency pay the cost for 2018. However, **we need to set up a rotating schedule of WG members who could cover this cost. If we have a list of different**

partners covering one year – then the cost will be spread out over the group. Soon we will be contacting NGOs and other WG members who may have some flexibility in their spending to see if we can get a list of supporters.

Sam – Research and Monitoring (SCollins@wlf.la.gov).

- Sam, Kelli and Clay are advancing the implementation of, and developing supporting document of “Reddish Egret Standardized Monitoring Breeding Pair Protocol”. We are concurrently developing the protocol and supporting document in order to be ready to organize and implement **the first standardized range-wide breeding pair count – scheduled for breeding season 2019!**
 - A webinar (July 25) was held with the research and monitoring committee to get comments and address major issues/concepts of the draft document. Partners from ProNatura (Mexico) were the biggest contributors – thank you!
 - A draft document (dated July 31, 2018) was then emailed to entire WG for comments. Few comments were returned; thanks to Bill Vermillion and Mitch Sternberg for your comments. Please provide comments if you haven’t – if you need a copy of the document, please contact Sam.
 - On August 13th we had a call with Erin Leone and Richard Kiltie (statisticians from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) about them assisting us by providing a statistical framework to analyze data. We will use Cox et al. 2017 as an example of how to combine various protocols to pool results and produce an estimate of breeding pairs for the range. First, we will take pair count data our partners have already collected and provide it to Leone and Kiltie for a first-cut analysis to help inform our next steps.
 - Sam is continuing to gather information from all of the WG members who conduct breeding pair counts in order to ensure we are aware of all protocols being used and how partners are implementing those protocols. To this end, Sam, Kelli and Clay are contacting partners throughout the range to ask them: (1) what protocol they are using (flight line count, etc.), (2) the particulars of the protocol they are using (how long are they standing at an observation point and are they repeating surveys in one breeding season, etc.), (3) are there any documents or directions associated with the protocol – to help answer question #2; (4) some data they have already collected on pair counts, and (5) provide us with a sample data sheet.
- Sam is working on updating the REEG Colony Database. It is a database Clay Green developed and has maintained – he asked for updates to it about a year ago and incorporated that feedback. Sam is asking partners again but it will really help to develop standardized breeding pair protocol recommendations AND to implement/organize the first survey, which is planned for breeding season of 2019.

Clay – Planning (claygreen@txstate.edu)

- Clay (through Texas State University) was awarded the NFWF grant we (Clay, Kelli and Andrew Cox) applied for last spring. The grant is to (1) update portions of the Rangewide Conservation Action Plan (Wilson et. al 2014) and (2) develop a U.S. Business Plan for REEG. Funding will cover cost of hiring an Open Standards Facilitator (the planning process used in 2014 plan) and supporting a post-doc (Dr. Bryan Tarbox) to facilitate workshops and ultimately update and write the plan(s). Our funding also provides for some travel expenses of a few WG members (from the entire range) to participate in the workshops to update/develop plan(s).
 - The project will officially start once the funding is transferred to Texas State, which will likely be in September 2018. The products (updated Rangewide plan and US Business Plan) are due 18 months after the project is launched which is approximately March 2020.

- The Rangewide Plan (Wilson et al 2014) needs to be updated first (only portions of it will be updated) because it addresses priorities (etc.) for the entire range – and then we can develop the U.S Business Plan, which is functionally a “step-down” specific action (and cost) plan for the U.S.
- We are planning on two meetings/workshops: (1) Florida and (2) Louisiana:
 - Louisiana Workshop (likely at the State of LA’s Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge), potential timeline of meeting: January – February (?) 2019
 - This will be the second workshop WG members are gathering to update the Rangewide plan. We anticipate that this location would be the easiest for the US working members to attend. The cost of lodging will be very low as there is a very nice and spacious bunkhouse we can rent, and we will provide vans to take WG members from airport to this remote (and beautiful) location.
 - The first workshop to update the Rangewide plan will (hopefully) be in conjunction with Alfredo Alvarez’s workshop in Mexico, which could be in autumn of 2018. We are assuming that this meeting in Mexico will be the easiest for partners from Mesoamerica to attend and help us incorporate more information from Central America and Cuba into the updated version of the Rangewide plan.
 - At these “Rangewide update workshops” (Louisiana and Mexico) we will work on updating portions of the 2014 plan such as (1) incorporate research results gained since 2012 when the plan was developed. Thanks to WG members’ good research, we know a lot more about this species than we did and the Plan needs to reflect that new understanding, (2) revisit and prioritize Range-wide objectives; (3) re-evaluate and re-develop (?) management units; and (4) incorporate information about parts of the range that were not included in the 2014 version; in particular information from Central America, Cuba and Bahamas.
 - Florida Workshop, ~Summer 2019
 - The first (and only) workshop to develop the U.S. Business Plan. We will have webinars prior to this workshop to accomplish some baseline work and likely have a webinar after the workshop for wrap-up tasks. We anticipate that most of our U.S. WG members will be able to at
 - Planning Committee Members who have committed to help implement the NFWF grant (i.e., help develop plans) include: Dean Demarest, Bill Vermillion, and Jesus Franco (thank you!)

Miscellaneous:

1. **We will not have an annual in-person Working Group meeting in January 2019.** In the recent past, the WG has met each January to work on a variety of issues and tasks. However, this year because we will be having workshops to update the REEG Conservation Plan and develop a US Business Plan, we will not have a WG meeting.
2. If your organization/agency/University can pay for a year of the REEG Webpage (about \$300) please contact Lianne Koczur.

Table 1. Reddish Egret Working Group Committee Members		
Committee	Member	Affiliation and Location
Communication	Stephanie Bilodeau	Coastal Bend, Bays and Estuaries Program, TX
	Emily Clark	USFWS, Sonora Joint Venture
	Ernesto Gómez	Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan A.C.
Research and Monitoring	Clay Green	Texas State University, TX
	Alfredo Alvarez	Pronatura Noreste, Mexico
	Andrew Cox	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
	Mitch Sternberg	USFWS, Zone Biologist, TX
	Bart Ballard	Texas A&M – Kingsville, TX
	John van Dort	Zamorano University, Honduras
	Alieny Gonzalez-Alfonso	Cuba
	Ariam Jimenez	Avian Research & Conservation Institute, Inc., FL
	Joyce Kleen	USFWS, FL
	Ken Meyer	Avian Research & Conservation Institute, Inc., FL
	David Newstead	Coastal Bend, Bays and Estuaries Program, TX
	Victoria Vazquez	Audubon Texas, TX
Habitat Management	David Newstead	Coastal Bend, Bays and Estuaries Program, TX
	Ann Paul	Audubon, Florida
	Victoria Vazquez	Audubon Texas, TX
	Javier Banda	Pronatura Norte, Mexico
	Woody Woodrow	USFWS, Coastal Partners Program, TX
Planning	Jesus Franco	Rio Grande Joint Venture, TX
	Bill Vermillion	Gulf Coast Joint Venture, LA
	Dean Demarest	USFWS, Migratory Birds, R4, GA

Acronym	Definition
NFWF	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
REEG	Reddish Egret
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WG	Working Group