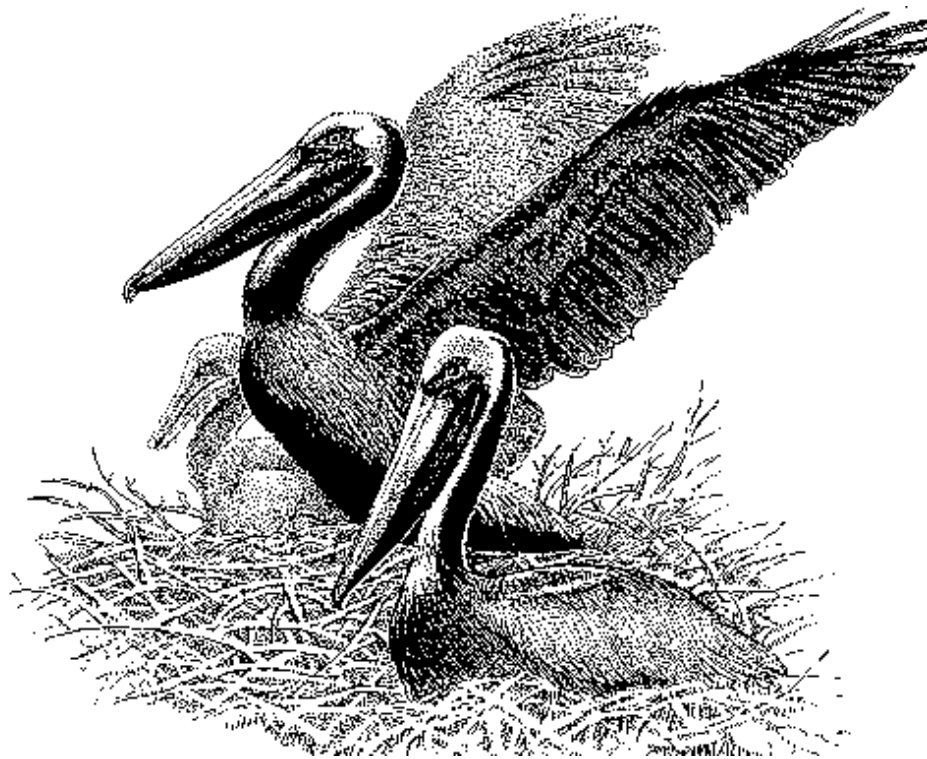


Gulf of Mexico Avian Monitoring Network

Operational Terms of Reference



Effective Date: 8 November 2016

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Operational Terms of Reference

VISION: A Community of Practice working collaboratively to leverage existing resources, capacities and expertise to develop and implement a Gulf-wide, coordinated and integrated avian monitoring program.

MISSION: The Gulf of Mexico Avian Monitoring Network (GoMAMN; hereafter “the Network”) facilitates and enhances integrated and complementary data collection for bird populations and their habitats that results in scientifically robust: (1) status assessments; (2) evaluation of management and restoration actions; and (3) evaluation of ecological processes affecting bird populations and their habitats in the Northern Gulf of Mexico.

DESCRIPTION: GoMAMN is a self-directed, non-regulatory network of conservation professionals. Partners within the Network collaborate to facilitate and coordinate monitoring plans that address current and future needs of bird populations and their habitats in the Gulf of Mexico. The Network builds upon well-established and accepted monitoring protocols and programs to facilitate development of new monitoring efforts where needed to connect, leverage, and integrate efforts into an efficient and comprehensive Gulf-wide avian monitoring program. Monitoring plans that emanate from the Network are advisory in nature, are nonbinding on any party, and are intended as recommendations to improve avian conservation through coordinated monitoring across the Gulf of Mexico region.

OBJECTIVES: Coordinate and facilitate avian monitoring for stakeholders involved in the restoration and management of natural resources in the United States portion of the Gulf of Mexico by:

- (1) Creating and maintaining a forum by which stakeholders can coordinate and integrate monitoring efforts for priority birds and their habitats;
- (2) Establishing clearly articulated core-values, data needs, and fundamental objectives underpinning monitoring efforts;
- (3) Facilitating the identification and implementation of cost-effective yet scientifically robust regional monitoring plans; and
- (4) Standardizing data collection and data management efforts that support adaptive management.

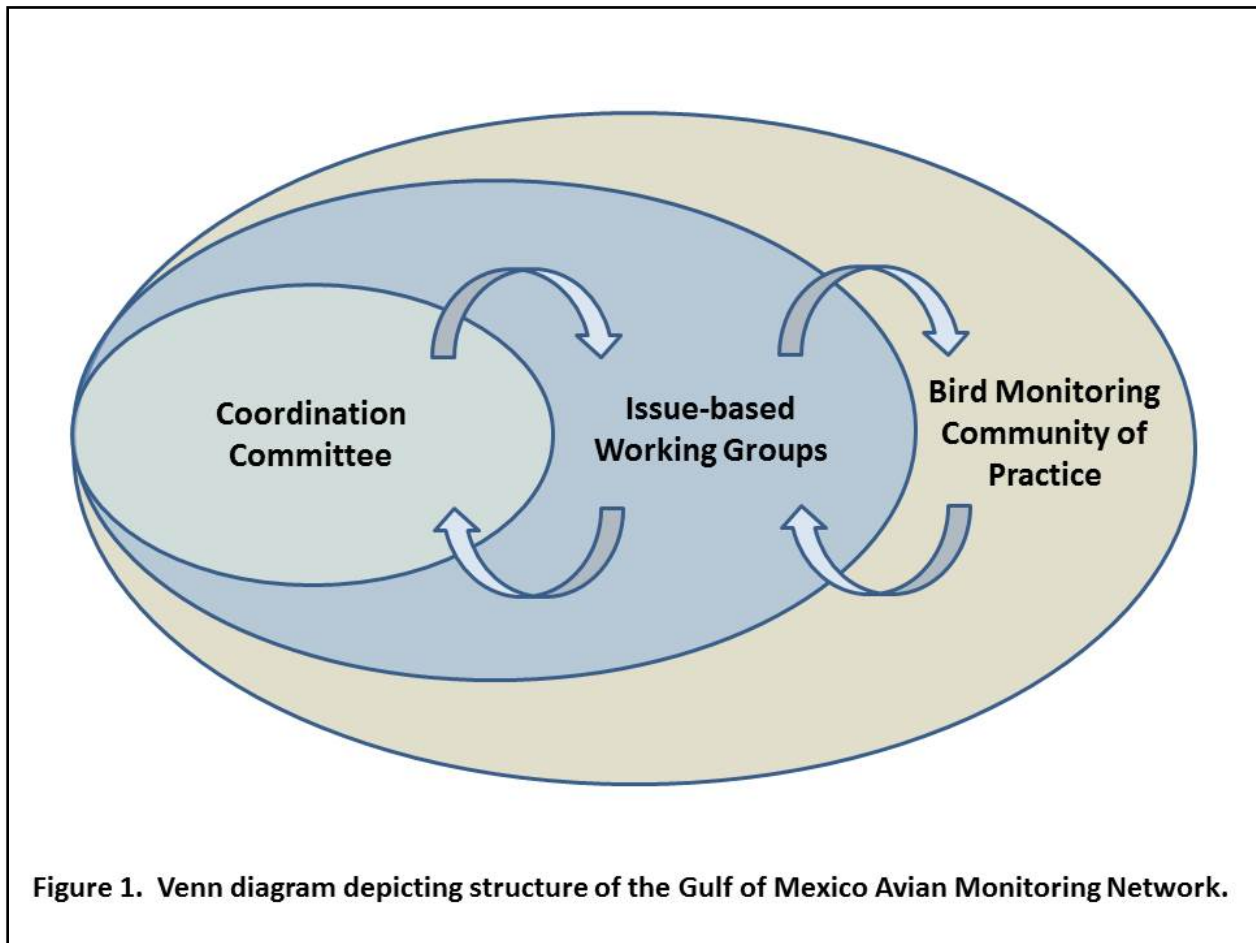
MEMBERSHIP: The Network is open to any professional interested in advancing and implementing bird monitoring within the northern Gulf of Mexico region. Participation is voluntary and subservient to the participant’s agency/organization/institution mission,

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authorities, and budgetary capabilities. Funds to support participation are not available through the Network at this time.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: The Network is comprised of three bodies: (1) Bird Monitoring Community of Practice; (2) Coordination Committee; and (3) Issue-based Working Groups (Figure 1).



The Community of Practice includes an array of stakeholders that advance bird conservation by providing both a forum and the expertise to unify and share knowledge of monitoring practitioners to design and implement coordinated and integrated bird monitoring. The Community of Practice is an opportunity for partners and stakeholders to identify priorities, standards, issues, concerns and needs underpinning bird monitoring. The Community of Practice also promotes and enables support for bird monitoring via a distributed outreach and education network.

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The Coordination Committee is responsible for: (1) the operational management and direction of the Network based upon input from the Community of Practice; (2) conveying information, needs, and recommendations to decision-makers, land managers and other interested parties; and (3) establishing and coordinating Issue-based Working Groups as needed.

The Coordination Committee shall include one representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Program, one from the USFWS Gulf Restoration Program, one representative from each of the five states bordering on the Gulf of Mexico (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas) and one representative from each of the Issue-based Working groups. The Coordination Committee shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members of the Coordination Committee, who shall both serve two-year terms of service. Vice-chairs shall become Chairs at the end of each Chair's term. Chairs may stand for re-election as Chair at the end of each 2-year term of service.

Issue-based Working Groups will be established by the Coordination Committee as needed. Membership of the working groups will be ad-hoc, voluntary, not limited in number, and include representatives from any participating entity (e.g., federal, state, non-governmental organizations, academic community, etc.) as warranted. Working Groups will elect a chair and vice-chair by simple majority to oversee work activities and produce solution-based products (e.g., proposals, technical reports, recommendations, etc.). Issue-based Working Groups are considered ad hoc in nature, and may be abolished by the Coordination Committee at any time if the purpose of the group is no longer warranted.

DECISION MAKING and OPERATIONS: The three components of the Network operate independently but in a coordinated fashion (see Fig. 1) to achieve the overall objectives of the Network.

Community of Practice – A meeting open to the entire Community of Practice shall be held at least once annually with meetings organized and conducted by the Coordination Committee. Meeting locations will rotate around the Gulf of Mexico region to facilitate attendance and travel. Meetings will generally be based around reports from the Issue-based Working Groups. No formal decisions are made through the Community of Practice, though the consensus of the Community of Practice will be reflected by the other two bodies. Instead, formal decisions are made via the Issue-based Working Groups and/or routed to the Coordinating Committee for consideration.

Coordination Committee – Beyond the operational oversight responsibilities, the Coordination Committee serves as the forum to enable formal decision making. All decisions made by the Coordination Committee will be via consensus, and when that is not possible, decisions will be determined by vote, with 75 percent needed to achieve majority, and in cases of vote, a minority

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report will be included in the notes. No decisions will be made without participation of at least 75 percent of the Coordination Committee members being represented in person or electronically. Members may assign their vote by written or electronic proxy to another member. The Coordination Committee will have in-person meetings at minimum once a year. The chairperson and/or vice-chair in the absence of the chairperson will organize and conduct any meetings of the Coordination Committee. Agendas will be proposed by the Chair to the Coordination Committee at least 14 days prior to the meeting and any member may add to the agenda. Notes from all meetings will be available by contacting the chairperson and/or vice-chair.

Issue-based Working Groups – Issue-based Working Groups will meet on an as-needed basis in person or electronically. All decisions will be via consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the issue should be elevated to the Coordination Committee via reporting that reflects all points of view. All meetings will be organized and conducted via the respective working group chairperson and/or vice-chair. Interim status reports will be provided to the Coordination Committee quarterly or upon request from the Coordination Committee.

MODIFICATIONS and EFFECTIVE DATE: The Terms of Reference contained herein, become effective as of the date approved by the Coordination Committee. These Terms of Reference may be subsequently amended or supplemented by the Coordination Committee and/or as directed by the Community of Practice via written petition submitted to the Coordination Committee chairperson.



Drawing Credits: Robert Savannah, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service