SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS INSTITUTE (SEI)

Multi-species avian ecology workshop

South Florida Ecosystem

Comprising >18,000sq miles, the South Florida Ecosystem comprises a diverse assemblage of species, habitats, and ecological processes.

Restoring and maintaining these species, habitats, and the ecological processes that bind them together is the foundation of a multi-species approach.

Ecosystem restoration necessitates a multi-species approach aimed at providing adequate habitat with its inclusive resources for all component species.

A multi-species approach to restoration presents scientific and management challenges that must be worked through.

Workshop Goals

Overall Goal: To help advance the restoration effort through a multi-species approach, SEI was asked to convene two workshops focused on avian multi-species.

Two Key Objectives:

Using a multi-species framework:

1. To articulate the science and help reach a common understanding of that body of knowledge, including an understanding of the uncertainties. (Workshop 1)

2. To use the science to address key multi-species management and policy questions (Workshop 2)

Workshop Focuses on Four Species

- This workshops focused on multi-species avian ecology with a specific focus on four species:
- Wood Stork,
- Snail Kite,
- Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow,
- Roseate Spoonbill

Articulate the Science to reach a common understanding: MARCH WORKSHOP

The SEI Process Overview

- A full, open, up to date presentation of the science (34 presentations)
- The science is debated in an open forum
- Panelists evaluate and synthesis the information

This creates a track record of the most current, best available information, and the scientific evaluation of it including an evaluation of uncertainty.

Scientific Panel

Jeffrey Walters (co-chair)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Martin Cody (co-chair)
UC Los Angeles

Peter Frederick
U. Florida

Reed Bowman
Archbold Research Station

Randall Hunt
USGS

Barry Noon
Colorado State University

Key Questions from the Multi-species Approach

Within this avian multi-species framework:

How is restoration likely to impact the species? Does the scientific evidence suggest that CERP will benefit all of them?

Are there trade offs or potential conflicts among the species? If so, under what conditions are they likely to occur, how severe are they likely to be, and how and when can they be ameliorated?

Restoration will change the landscape. In this transition to a more natural ecosystem will some species be more vulnerable, others more resilient? How will they respond and how might we ameliorate the risks?

Panel was additionally asked to pay attention to areas of uncertainty and risk.
Panel was asked to evaluate the quality of the scientific information and data needs.

South Florida Ecosystem

Science indicates that CERP will benefit all four species.

There are no apparent trade offs because the species are diverse in their requirements, and a restored Everglades will support a sufficiently wide range of conditions with broad temporal and spatial variability.

Assumption of CERP: that hydrology and habitat restoration goals are met.

Transition (Change)

Transition stresses are likely.

Due to their ability to move, and their distribution range, storks, spoonbills and kites appear to be sufficiently resilient to withstand transitional changes.

Sparrows are not as resilient, making them especially vulnerable to transition. Current information gaps for the sparrow create uncertainties.

2. Policy and management questions

In the short- to mid-term, what are the specific areas of uncertainty, data gaps, and questions that we need to address in order to shepherd the multi-species through the transition, and effect restoration?

FORMAT AND AGENDA

Purpose: ***Present the scientific findings to policy makers and managers***

Format

1. Overview and presentation summary

2. Facilitated question and answer with Task Force and panel representatives

3. Faciltated open question and answer session with managers, policy makers, and panelists.

Scientific Facilitator: Steven Courtney