



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES
TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR
THE AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)
Criewen, Germany, 25-27 June 2006

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES

Agenda Item 1: Welcoming remarks

1. The CMS Secretariat Agreements Officer, Mr. Lyle Glowka, opened the meeting and introduced Dr. Torsten Langgemach, Landesumweltamt Brandenburg, Staatliche Vogelschutzwarte (Brandenburg State Office for Environment, Bird Conservation Centre). Dr. Langgemach welcomed the participants to Criewen on behalf of Prof. Dr. Matthias Freude, President of the Brandenburg State Office for Environment. Mr. Glowka then introduced Mr. Dirk Treichel, Director of the Nationalpark Unteres Odertal, who also welcomed the delegates.

2. In his remarks, Mr. Glowka thanked the State of Brandenburg for providing financial and logistical support to make the meeting possible, and the one-day Scientific Symposium on the Aquatic Warbler, which preceded the MoU Meeting on 24 June 2006. He also thanked the Flemish Community for its generous financial contribution to the meeting. Finally, he thanked BirdLife International for acting as the Secretariat's technical adviser and for preparing a number of documents for the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Signing ceremony

3. Mr. Glowka explained that a signing ceremony is a normal part of CMS MoU meetings. To date three countries had yet to sign the MoU. The three outstanding Range States were invited to consider signing the MoU during the meeting. One country - the Netherlands - sent its regrets; neither France, nor the Russian Federation responded. Therefore there would be no signing ceremony.

Agenda Item 3: Election of officers

4. The meeting elected Dr. Martin Flade (Germany) as chair of the meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule

5. The meeting accepted the Chair's proposal that it should operate without formal written rules of procedure.

6. The Secretariat introduced the meeting documents list (CMS/AW-1/3). The final list of meeting documents is reproduced as Annex 3 to this report.

7. The agenda and schedule were adopted without amendment. The adopted agenda is reproduced as Annex 2 to this report.

Agenda Item 5: Opening statements

8. The Chair invited opening statements from the signatories indicating support or assistance provided or intending to provide and a report from the Scientific Symposium that preceded the meeting.

9. The representative of the United Kingdom thanked the Secretariat for coordinating the MoU to date, confirmed the continued interest of his government in the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and announced that the government decided to support the implementation of the MoU with 10,000 pounds sterling.

10. The representative of BirdLife International stated that his organization has been and will continue to be closely involved in conserving the species through its national partners, its European Division and through its participation in the CMS Scientific Council.

11. Dr. Flade, Chair of the Aquatic Warbler Scientific Symposium, reported on the Symposium's key conclusions.

Agenda Item 6: Report of the Secretariat

12. Mr. Glowka explained that the report of the Secretariat was composed of sub-Agenda Items 6.1 (Status of signatures), 6.2 (List of designated national contact points), and 6.3 (Any other matters). The report of the Secretariat was presented as document CMS/AW-1/4.

Agenda Item 6.1: Status of signatures

13. Mr. Glowka noted that the Range States that had yet to sign the MoU were France, the Netherlands and the Russian Federation.

14. The observer from the Russia Federation informed the meeting that the Russian Federation was only a signatory of the CMS Siberian Crane MoU, and that the experience had been positive to date. He also mentioned that in Russia all formal mechanisms for species conservation are in place, and proposed to convey information about the MoU to the relevant authorities, with emphasis on conservation and financial implications of joining the MoU.

15. The observer from France informed the meeting that the primary reason for it not joining the MoU was due to the lack of information on France's significance for Aquatic Warbler conservation. She stated that the expectation is that it is likely that France will sign the MoU in the near future.

16. The Netherlands was not represented at the meeting, but the participants stressed that the Netherlands is a very important stop-over country for migrating Aquatic Warblers and should be encouraged to sign the MoU.

17. The meeting took note of the report of the Secretariat and invited France, the Netherlands and Russian Federation to consider signing the MoU as soon as possible. The meeting also stressed that joining the MoU should be regarded as an additional possibility to fundraise for

conservation of the species. The meeting requested the Secretariat to contact the governments of these Range States informing them about the significance of their countries for conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and inviting them to join the MoU. BirdLife International will approach the Range States on the same issue through BirdLife national partners in relevant countries.

Agenda Item 6.2: List of designated national contact points

18. Mr. Glowka informed the meeting that one Signatory (Lithuania) still needed to designate its national contact point. The meeting took note of the Secretariat's report and invited Lithuania to supply the Secretariat with their officially designated contact point as soon as possible. The list of designated national contact points is attached to this report as Annex 4.

Agenda Item 7: Review of MoU and Action Plan implementation

19. Mr. Glowka explained that Agenda Item 7 was composed of sub-Agenda Item 7.1 (Aquatic Warbler conservation status within the agreement area) and sub-Agenda Item 7.2 (Implementation of the Action Plan). The relevant documentation for the Agenda Item included documents CMS/AW-1/5 (Review of MoU and Action Plan Implementation) and CMS/AW-1/5/Add.1 (Overview Report).

Agenda Item 7.1: Aquatic Warbler conservation status within the agreement area

20. The Chair invited Mr. Viktor Fenchuk of BirdLife International, acting on behalf of the Secretariat, to present a review of the conservation status of the Aquatic Warbler within the agreement area. The information provided in the Secretariat's Overview Report was collected prior to the meeting and was based in part on information available to BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team as well as national reports available before 31 May 2006. The Scientific Symposium provided the opportunity to review this information and appropriate updates were made and recommended to the signatories for endorsement. Participants were invited to comment further on this part of the Overview Report.

21. The meeting provided further input into the report, and considered the Scientific Symposium's recommended revisions as well. The revised Overview Report is attached to this report as Annex 5.

Agenda Item 7.2: Status of implementation

22. Mr. Glowka explained that the Secretariat's Overview Report summarized the information received and available as of 31 May 2006 with regard to the status of the MoU and Action Plan's implementation. The MoU and Action Plan (Part I) provide the general substantive framework for action within the agreement area. Part II of the Action Plan, describing country-specific actions agreed by each Signatory, supplements this. He noted that only one Signatory had not submitted its national report. Russia, a non-signatory, submitted a national report.

23. The Chair invited Mr. Fenchuk to provide a brief summary of the Overview Report on behalf of the Secretariat and to draw conclusions as necessary. The Chair then invited the Signatories and the Collaborating Organization to provide comments on this part of the Overview Report, share additional information and any problems/gaps in their implementation as well as to make informal indications as to the need to amend Part II of the Action Plan. The revised Overview Report is attached to this report as Annex 5.

24. With regard to Part II of the Action Plan, Lithuania informally indicated that its respective part could be amended.

Agenda Item 8: Future implementation and further development of the MoU and Action Plan

25. The Secretariat introduced Agenda Item 8 as being composed of four sub-Agenda Items: 8.1 (National reporting and information management), 8.2 (MoU coordination), 8.3 (Priority project list), and 8.4 (Preliminary discussions on expanding the MoU's geographical scope).

Agenda Item 8.1: Draft national report format

26. The Chair noted that MoU paragraph 6 refers to reporting and that the Secretariat had developed for the meeting's consideration a draft national report format that could be used as the basis for future reporting on the MoU and Action Plan's implementation.

27. The Secretariat introduced the draft reporting format found in document CMS/AW-1/6 (Draft national report format). The meeting was invited to provide comments on the draft format, as well as to consider more generally the national reporting issue, the general issue of information management and the ways and means to improve the submission rate of national reports.

28. The meeting suggested:

- Grouping all information under the "Legal protection", "Knowledge issues", "Implementation of measures" and "Conservation status" headings and, where possible, making a distinction between "breeding", "passage" and "wintering" sites;
- Including a request for information about people who work on conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and their fields of interest; and
- Clearly indicating the period for which reporting is requested.

29. The meeting endorsed the report format as amended and requested the Secretariat to revise the format and use it for the next meeting. The revised national reporting format is attached to this report as Annex 6.

Agenda Item 8.2: MoU coordination

30. Introducing the item, Mr. Glowka referred to documents CMS/AW-1/7 (Future MoU Coordination) and CMS/AW-1/7/Add.1 (Report on Interim Coordination) and informed that currently the CMS Secretariat acts as the secretariat to MoUs developed under CMS auspices at no cost to the MoU signatories. CMS seeks to partner with collaborating organisations to support Range States MoU meeting organisation and provide technical documentation (e.g., BirdLife International (BLI)) and outsourcing coordination of the MoU to such organizations, of which there are currently three up and running examples: Siberian Crane (International Crane Foundation); IOSEA (CMS); and Great Bustard (BLI).

31. Starting from April 2004 BirdLife International has provided interim coordination services at no cost to the Convention and proposed creating a post for an International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Officer (AWCO). In the years 2004-2006 an interim AWCO was funded by the German Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection; this funding is limited until the

end of 2006. Mr. Lars Lachmann (BirdLife International) presented interim results of the AWCO's work in 2005-2006 and announced that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the BirdLife partner in the United Kingdom, was ready to provide 50% of the costs of supporting the AWCO for the years 2007 and 2008.

32. Mr. Glowka invited the meeting to consider the general issue of MoU coordination and the particular issue of outsourcing some aspects of the MoU's coordination to a collaborating organisation to support a range of activities. This was in keeping with CMS's developing practice of outsourcing the implementation of MoUs to support meeting preparation, technical support to Range States developing projects for funding and range-wide awareness raising.

33. The meeting endorsed the Secretariat's proposal to outsource coordination functions for the Aquatic Warbler MoU to BirdLife International and establish the AWCO. Since it might not be possible to allocate matching co-funding for this position from the regular CMS budget, the Secretariat appealed to Signatories to consider supporting this position and will work with potential donors to secure funding.

Agenda Item 8.3: Develop a priority projects list

34. The Chair introduced document CMS/AW-1/8 (Priority Projects List). Mr. Fenchuk then presented the draft priority projects list and the amendments suggested by the Scientific Symposium. The Signatories were asked to review the list, the suggested amendments and make additional comments or revisions.

35. The meeting endorsed the priority projects list as amended. The revised priority project list is attached to this report as Annex 7. It was agreed that the list will be updated on the running basis by the Secretariat and the AWCO.

Agenda Item 8.4: Preliminary discussions on expanding the geographical scope of the agreement area

36. The Chair invited the meeting to have a preliminary discussion on the need for and desirability of expanding the MoU's geographical scope of application and asked the Secretariat to introduce Document CMS/AW-1/9 (Expanding the Memorandum's Geographical Scope: Preliminary Discussions) and the conclusions of the Scientific Symposium.

37. During the discussion a consensus emerged that (a) Mauritania should be invited to join the MoU and (b) Morocco should also be invited since it seems to be an important stop-over site for the Aquatic Warbler and a potential bottle-neck along its migratory route. It was agreed that following implementation of the desk study to summarise all Aquatic Warbler ringing data, other countries may be identified as being important for the Aquatic Warbler.

38. The meeting requested the Secretariat to invite Mauritania and Morocco to sign the MoU. The AWCO in consultation with the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team of BirdLife International (AWCT) will prepare fact sheets on the significance of these countries for the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler. The AWCT will work to identify other potential Range States to the MoU and provide further guidance to the Secretariat on the issue.

Agenda Item 10: Next meeting of the Signatories

39. The Chair introduced Document CMS/AW-1/10 (Next Meeting of the Signatories) and invited the meeting to consider when it would be best to have the next meeting of Signatories.

40. The meeting agreed, that 3 years is an optimal time span to have the next meeting. Poland's representative offered to explore the opportunity to host the next meeting in 2009, when there will be the final meeting of the LIFE project on Aquatic Warbler conservation. A possible cross-border meeting with Lithuania was proposed as a good opportunity to involve Lithuania. Lithuania's representative agreed to explore this possibility with his government and with Polish governmental officials. The meeting concluded that the Secretariat should explore further the option with the LIFE project coordinator and the governments of Poland and Lithuania.

Agenda Item 11: Any other business

41. The Chair invited the meeting to raise any other issues not covered under the previous Agenda Items. No additional issues were raised.

42. The Chair invited feedback from the meeting regarding the rules of procedure. It was agreed that it was not necessary at this time to request the Secretariat to develop formal rules of procedure.

Agenda Item 12: Closure of the meeting

43. There being no other business, the Chair thanked all of the participants for their contributions and the Secretariat for the logistical and substantive preparations, and declared the meeting closed at 1500hrs. on Tuesday, 27 June 2006.