



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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SIXTH MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES
FOR THE SIBERIAN CRANE (*Grus leucogeranus*)
Almaty, Kazakhstan, 15-19 May 2007
Agenda Item 8.4

EAST-ASIAN AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP

(Prepared by Wetlands International)

Overview

1. The Partnership for the East Asian–Australasian Flyway was launched in Bogor, Indonesia, on 6 November 2006. A total of 17 Partners have signed up to the initiative, including: the Russian Federation, USA, Japan, Republic of Korea, The Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, the International Crane Foundation, BirdLife International, Wetlands International, WWF International, World Conservation Union and the Australasian Wader Studies Group. The other Range States of the Flyway and international organisations are being invited to join. Australia and the Republic of Korea will serve as the first Chair and Vice Chair of the Partnership for a term of two years and one year respectively. A Secretariat is to be established to support the Partnership.
2. The Flyway Partnership is an evolution of the previous decade of work conducted by the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee under its Strategy and species-group Action Plans (for migratory cranes, shorebirds and Anatidae). The Partnership will provide the international basis for migratory waterbird conservation action into the future in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.
3. The three Site Networks established under the Strategy have been combined into the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Site Network. This development is expected to increase the work on sustainable use of internationally important sites for migratory waterbirds.
4. The First Meeting of the Partners was held on 7 and 8 November 2006 during which a number of decisions were made to establish the administrative arrangements for the Flyway Partnership. Australia, the Republic of Korea, Japan and USA offered to provide initial funding for a Secretariat in 2007. Partners agreed that three thematic groups were needed in 2007 to develop advice on the issues of “sustainable development and capacity development”, “communication, education and public awareness” and “science”. The development of a Communication Plan for the Flyway Partnership was considered a priority for 2007. The Asia-Pacific Working Group on Migratory Waterbirds and Avian Influenza established in early 2006 will be included under the Partnership.

5. The meeting drafted a five year Implementation Strategy that identifies international priorities. Task groups were also identified to progress administrative arrangements for the Flyway Partnership and to contribute to specific work plan activities for 2007. Partners identified activities that would be undertaken in their countries and by their organisations across the Flyway in 2007 to support implementation of the Partnership. Recommendations of these task groups will be tabled at the next Meeting of Partners, which is scheduled for November 2007.

6. The partners agreed that the list of migratory waterbird species and populations under the Partnership would include some additional seabird species that have populations that migrate within the Flyway.

7. Range States were invited to propose all former sites of the North East Asian Crane Site Network, along with those in the former East Asian Anatidae and East Asian-Australasian shorebird site networks, under the new Flyway Site Network. This will include all the sites that had been recognised to be of international importance for Siberian Crane. Nomination of new sites to the Site Network is to be on the basis of updated criteria that were approved for the Flyway Site Network. The criteria focus on identifying sites on the basis of international importance for migratory waterbirds (including Siberian Crane and other threatened species) in line with the criteria approved under the Ramsar Convention and additional criteria on the basis of importance of sites during staging.

8. The Partnership has invited the Crane Working Group covering North East Asia to provide draft terms of reference for their specialist group to provide support to the Flyway Partnership.

9. The Partnership is poised to act as a key international conservation framework for migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, including the North East Flyway of the Siberian Crane.

Linkage to the CMS Siberian Crane MoU

10. The framework of the former Strategy recognised the CMS Siberian Crane MoU and other single species initiatives as providing mechanism for conservation action focussed on threatened species and their habitats.

11. Until 2007, the Crane Working Group provided the mechanism for coordinating activities in the Eastern Flyway of the Siberian Crane, including cooperation with the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project and implementation of conservation actions for the North East Asian Crane Site Network in Russia, China and Mongolia. With the launch of the Flyway Partnership, the North East Asian Crane Site Network has been combined into the single East Asian – Australasian Flyway Site Network for all migratory waterbirds, but these sites and crane populations will continue to receive focused attention from the Crane Working Group under the Partnership.

12. The Siberian Crane MoU provides a strong and focussed mechanism for undertaking conservation action on the Siberian Crane and its habitats for the Eastern population (in addition to the Western and Central populations). It thus provides an opportunity, especially through the GEF project, to contribute to the implementation of conservation priorities for migratory waterbirds and their habitats in a synergetic manner with the Flyway Partnership within the overlapping geographic remit of the MoU.

Action requested:

The Meeting is invited to:

- Take note of the EAAF Partnership report;
- Consider how the MoU can be best represented at the annual meetings of the EAAF Partnership; and
- Initially consider the opportunities for synergy between the MoU and EAAF Partnership.

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