



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.



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

*Lower Oder Valley National Park, Criewen, Germany
25-27 June 2006*

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**FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE
AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)**

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AGENDA

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Signing ceremony
3. Election of officers
4. Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule
5. Opening statements
6. Report of the Secretariat
 - 6.1 Status of signatures
 - 6.2 List of designated national contact points
 - 6.3 Any other matters
7. Review of MoU and Action Plan implementation
 - 7.1 Aquatic warbler conservation status within the agreement area
 - 7.2 Status of implementation
8. Future implementation and further development of the MoU and Action Plan
 - 8.1 National reporting and information management
 - 8.2 MoU coordination
 - 8.3 Develop a priority projects list
 - 8.4 Preliminary discussions on expanding the geographical scope of the agreement area
9. Next meeting of the Signatories
10. Any other business
11. Closure of the meeting

**FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF
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FINAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document
CMS/AW-1/1/Rev.2	4.0	Draft Provisional Agenda
CMS/AW-1/2	4.0	Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule
CMS/AW-1/3	4.0	List of Documents
CMS/AW-1/4	6.0	Report of the Secretariat
CMS/AW-1/5	7.0	Review of MoU and Action Plan Implementation
CMS/AW-1/5/Add.1	7.0	Overview Report
CMS/AW-1/6 + annex	8.1	National Reporting and Information Management
CMS/AW-1/7	8.2	Future MoU Coordination
CMS/AW-1/7/Add.1	8.2	Report on Interim Coordination
CMS/AW-1/8	8.3	Priority Projects List
CMS/AW-1/9	8.4	Expanding the Memorandum's Geographical Scope: Preliminary Discussions
CMS/AW-1/10	9.0	Next Meeting of the Signatories
CMS/AW-1/Inf/1	6.1	Status of Signatures to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler
CMS/AW-1/Inf/2	6.2	List of Designated National Contact Points
CMS/AW-1/Inf/2/Add.1	6.2	Designated National Contact Point Form
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.x	7.0	National Reports from Signatories
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.1		Belarus
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.2		Bulgaria
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.3		Latvia
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.4		Hungary
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.5		Belgium
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.6		Germany
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.7		Senegal
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.8		Lithuania
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.9		Ukraine
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.10		Poland
CMS/AW-1/Inf/3.11		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document
CMS/AW-1/Inf/4.x	7.0	Reports from Collaborating Organisations
CMS/AW-1/Inf/5.x	7.0	National Reports from Non-Signatories
CMS/AW-1/Inf/5.1		Russian Federation
CMS/AW-1/Inf/5.2		France
CMS/AW-1/Inf/6	7.0	Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler and Action Plan
CMS/AW-1/Inf/7		Provisional List of Participants
CMS/AW-1/Inf/8	5.0, 7.0	Programme of the Aquatic Warbler Scientific Symposium
CMS/AW-1/Inf/9	7.0	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and Appendices
CMS/AW-1/Inf/10		Investigating Aquatic Warbler Wintering Grounds
CMS/AW-1/Inf/11		Aquatic Warbler Flyway Newsletter (First Edition – January 2005)

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FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE
AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

Lower Oder Valley National Park, Criewen, Germany
25-27 June 2006

CMS/AW-1/Report
Annex 5

REVISED OVERVIEW REPORT

(Prepared by Birdlife International on behalf of the CMS Secretariat)

1.0 Introduction

1. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (MoU), the Secretariat shall prepare an overview report compiled on the basis of information at its disposal pertaining to the Aquatic Warbler. It shall communicate this report to each of the Range States and the Co-operating Organisations. Signatories are to compile a report on implementation of this MoU in each of the respective countries and to provide the Secretariat with this report.

2. Reports by the Signatories are a primary source of information for the overview report. By letter dated 20 February 2006 the Secretariat provided to all MoU signatories, non-signatory Range States and signing organisations a reporting template for Parts I and II of the Aquatic Warbler Action Plan. As of 31 May 2006 the Signatories from the following Range States had submitted their national reports to the Secretariat: Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Senegal, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. A report from the Russian Federation, a non-signatory, was also received. Information available to BirdLife International in the form of data and project reports, conference proceedings and published materials was also used.

3. This revised report also takes account of a report submitted after 31 May by France, a non-signatory. Additional information provided by participants at the First Meeting of the Signatory States, as well as that available from the Aquatic Warbler Scientific Symposium which preceded the MoU meeting (24 June 2006) was also incorporated into the revised report.

4. The structure of this report follows the draft national report format. Corresponding action points from the Action Plan are indicated in square brackets. This report does not repeat the information provided in the national reports. It only summarizes the main issues.

2.0 Status of the Aquatic Warbler in the Agreement Area

5. The status of the species is assessed here on the basis of the information available to BirdLife International, the national reports submitted and from the Birds in Europe 2 database, monitoring and project reports of BirdLife International partners and members of the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team.

6. Over the last 10 years the world population of the Aquatic Warbler has been fluctuating. The overall decline has been stopped thanks to active conservation efforts at large breeding sites. Several new breeding sites have been found since the Memorandum's entry into effect, which has contributed to the increase of the population. At the same time, many smaller Aquatic Warbler breeding sites have been lost or breeding conditions deteriorated due to overgrowth.

7. The only known genetically distinct Pomeranian population (Germany and West Poland) has continued to decline, falling from 242 in 1996 to only 78 vocalizing males at just 7 small breeding sites in 2005.

Table 1. Breeding population of the Aquatic Warbler based on the information collected by BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (Source: Flade, 2005)

State	Years	Population size (vocalizing males)		Geometric mean	Trend
		min	max		
Belarus	1996-2005	7,009	11,354	10,152	Fluctuating
Germany	1996-2005	7	33		Declining
Hungary	1996-2005	386	700	578	Increasing
Latvia	1996-2005	0	3		Fluctuating
Lithuania	2000-2005	160	320	209	Fluctuating
Poland	1997-2005	2,634	3,448	3,026	Fluctuating
Russia	1996-2005	50	500	158	Unknown
Ukraine	1996-2005	1,260	4,235	2,656	Slightly increasing
Global Population Estimate		13,330	18,925	16,960	

8. The status of the Aquatic Warbler in Russia is not clear. The small Siberian breeding population is unstable and its extinction is expected in the near future. Stable breeding sites in European Russia are unlikely to exist, since extensive search by AWCT members 1998-2006 has shown that nearly no suitable habitats have remained due to drainage and - more recently - abandonment of former potential breeding sites.

9. On migration, the Aquatic Warbler is regularly registered in Europe in Belgium, France, Latvia, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. In Africa, the Aquatic Warbler has so far been recorded in 11 countries - Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Canary Islands (Spain), Western Sahara, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Guinea Bissau and Ghana, with Senegal, Mauritania and Mali considered as the most likely wintering localities.

3.0 Implementation of the Action Plan

10. **Legal protection [AP 1.1.]:** The Action Plan calls for the promotion of national and international broad policies and legislation which favour the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat.

11. The Aquatic Warbler is strictly protected in most countries of its European range: **Belarus, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, the UK,**

and Ukraine reported that the species protection level is sufficient to ensure protection of the species and its breeding sites as well as exclude potential detrimental developments at Aquatic Warbler breeding sites. In **Senegal** the Aquatic Warbler is not protected specifically, although the species is under general wildlife protection, which is considered as not sufficient. Increase of the knowledge on the status of the species at its migration and wintering sites will favour strengthening of protection of the species there. Inclusion of the Aquatic Warbler into Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and habitat types occupied by the Aquatic Warbler into Annex I of the Habitat Directive facilitates conservation of the species and protection of its breeding sites in the EU.

12. As an instrument to encourage suitable farming practices at breeding sites impacted by drainage or threatened by succession, the Action Plan calls for development of policy incentives that favour conservation of the Aquatic Warbler. Addressing the issue, **Germany** reported that several agri-environmental schemes are used in Brandenburg to support implementation of habitat management at Aquatic Warbler breeding sites. In **Latvia** agri-environmental schemes could potentially be used for conservation of Aquatic Warbler breeding sites after restoration of meadows and recognition of them as agricultural land. In **Poland**, new agro-environmental schemes are being developed now for 2007-2013 to specifically support suitable farming practices on Aquatic Warbler habitats. No incentives for Aquatic Warbler friendly agriculture are currently available outside the EU, for example, in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

13. *Species and habitat protection [AP 2.1.1.]:* The Action Plan calls for adequate protection of the breeding sites and removal of key factors adversely affecting the breeding habitat. It calls for designation as protected areas of all sites regularly holding breeding Aquatic Warblers and prevention of habitat alteration, habitat fragmentation, pollution and other factors that could be detrimental to the Aquatic Warbler in its breeding sites.

14. **Germany, Hungary** and **Latvia** reported that the only known breeding sites are strictly protected. In **Lithuania**, 6 of 7 known Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are fully protected with the remaining small site (Sierpiejai, 4 vocalizing males) currently being evaluated for protection. **Ukraine** reports that at the moment 60% of Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are protected with an increase to 90% protection envisaged by the end of 2006 with establishment of Pripyat National Park and two Nature Reserves of national importance. In **Belarus**, over 80% of breeding sites are protected which corresponds to upwards of 90% of the national population of the Aquatic Warbler. In **Poland** Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are almost entirely located within protected areas, although legal protection does not necessarily reject all possible detrimental developments.

15. Management plans are being implemented at key Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in **Belarus** (Zvanets, Sprava and Dzikaje mires) and in Hortobágy National Park in **Hungary**. In **Lithuania** management plans have been developed for 4 out of 7 Aquatic Warbler breeding sites (Zuvintas, Svencele, Kliosiai and Sausgalviai), and implementation will start upon their approval. Management recommendations are being elaborated for the only currently occupied Aquatic Warbler breeding site in **Germany** in Lower Oder Valley National Park. The recommendations are planned to be included into the National Park's Management Plan. A Management Plan for the potentially restored former breeding site, Peene Valle, is planned for development. In **Poland** management plans will be developed shortly for most breeding sites. In **Latvia** management planning has not been started.

16. *Preventing detrimental developments at breeding sites [AP 2.1.2]:* The Action Plan calls on Range States to prevent habitat alteration, habitat fragmentation, pollution and other factors that could be detrimental to the Aquatic Warbler in its breeding sites. While **all countries**

reported that no detrimental projects have been implemented since signing of the Memorandum, several potentially detrimental developments raise concern. Unlike many other species which would benefit from strict protection of breeding habitats, the Aquatic Warbler is highly dependent on regular habitat management. In **Germany**, implementation of the existing Lower Oder Valley National Park Act will put up to 50% of the Aquatic Warbler territories into the core strict protection zone, where no management will be allowed. This would have a very negative effect on the breeding population. There is hope that the new National Park Act will mitigate the negative effect of this paradoxical situation by postponing enforcement of the core zone so that land uses favourable to the Aquatic Warbler in its breeding sites could continue and more time could be used to develop substitute sites. The Lower Oder Valley National Park Act also envisages establishment of a new border crossing with traffic lines across the National Park which will affect part of the breeding population not threatened by core zone enforcement. In Poland, a planned road development project near Chelm mires can be a very high potential threat if implemented.

17. *Management of the breeding habitat [AP 2.2.]:* The Action Plan calls for the implementation of habitat management favourable to the Aquatic Warbler: hydrological management, preventing natural succession of the vegetation, implementing hand-scything and mowing, conducting controlled burning and grazing.

18. Water management is implemented at Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in **Belarus, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine**. Following completion of hydrological works at 3 key Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in **Belarus**, habitat management (hand and tractor mowing) will be established at Zvanets and Sporava mires in 2006-2007, where bush removal and mowing will be implemented on 1200 hectares. In **Poland**, 2500 hectares have been mown in previous years in Biebrza National Park, and a management plan for the park envisages mowing of 32,562 hectares with 8000 hectares of bush removal. In **Ukraine** hydrological works were implemented at one key Aquatic Warbler breeding site in Pripjat floodplain which would favour the Aquatic Warbler and improve hay yields thus stimulating hand-mowing still implemented by local community. In **Poland**, land at some of the breeding sites is privately owned, which hampers water management. In **Germany**, water management in the Lower Oder Valley National Park is conducted but without focus on the requirements of the Aquatic Warbler.

19. Extensive grazing is implemented to conserve Aquatic Warbler sites in **Hungary and Poland**. Pilot application of grazing and controlled burning is planned at Zvanets (**Belarus**) although it still depends on funding and legalization of controlled burning. Mowing and grazing are also applied in **Germany**, but any management will have to be stopped in part of the current Aquatic Warbler range located within the planned core area of the Lower Oder Valley National Park after the National Park Act comes into force. A research project is now being conducted to identify potential replacement areas and appropriate management techniques. Implementation of management at breeding sites is hampered by the absence of a Site Management Plan in **Latvia** and approval of already developed plans in **Lithuania**, where pilot small scale mowing was implemented at 4 sites and grazing at 2 sites.

20. Legalization of controlled burning as a habitat management tool in **Belarus and Poland** is now being reviewed. In **Germany** controlled burning is planned to be used as a habitat management tool for restoration of the former breeding site in Peene Valley. Controlled burning is currently legal in **Hungary** but its application for Aquatic Warbler conservation is not considered necessary.

21. Dissemination of habitat management recommendations has been initiated in **Belarus**. In **Germany**, close contacts with landowners have proven to be very successful.
22. *Protection the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat in the winter quarters and along the migration route [AP 2.3.]:* The Action Plan requests Range States to protect and appropriately manage all sites used regularly by the Aquatic Warbler on passage and during winter.
23. Aquatic Warbler passage sites in the breeding range have not been identified to a large extent. In **Belarus** and **Latvia** migrating birds are thought to use breeding sites as pre-migration congregation areas and migration stopovers, so birds might benefit from protection and management of breeding sites. In **Latvia**, the only known migration site (Lake Pape) is protected.
24. In **Belgium** one of the most important known passage sites (Harbour area of Zeebrugge) was lost in the late 1990's. The current most important site (decantation pits of Veurne) is threatened by the stopping of land use. In **France**, most Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are protected (the Aquatic Warbler is mentioned on migration in 30 SPAs), but this protection is not specifically targeted at the Aquatic Warbler. A LIFE-Nature project is run by Bretagne Vivante - SEPNEB is aimed at management and restoration at 3 Aquatic Warbler migration sites. A large-scale conservation and restoration project involving mowing, removal of accumulated biomass, controlled grazing and burning is now implemented at La Nava (**Spain**) by the Foundation for Global Nature. In the **UK**, all sites regularly holding migrating Aquatic Warblers are protected and regularly monitored.
25. Little is known on migration routes and wintering sites of Aquatic Warbler in Africa. In **Senegal**, the two known sites where the Aquatic Warbler is registered in winter are protected but protection level is not sufficient. **BirdLife International** has been summarizing existing information on registrations of the Aquatic Warbler in Africa, which helped further identify several potentially important sites for migrating and wintering Aquatic Warblers. On-the-ground verification of the results of desk-studies is needed to ensure appropriate protection and management of these sites in the future.
26. *Restoration of habitats for the Aquatic Warbler [AP 2.4.]:* The Action Plan calls on countries within the breeding range of the Aquatic Warbler to undertake ecological restoration of potential breeding sites. Potential breeding sites have been to a different extent surveyed and identified in **Belarus, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland**. Restoration and ecological rehabilitation of several currently abandoned Aquatic Warbler breeding sites will be approached in **Belarus** in 2006-2010. In **Germany** and **Poland** about 1,500 ha of new potential habitat in Pomerania and Biebrza will be restored within the framework of the LIFE project "Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany". Restoration of abandoned Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in Pomerania is targeted by this LIFE project and will be especially significant to conserve the sharply declining Pomeranian population of the Aquatic Warbler.
27. *Development and implementation of Aquatic Warbler monitoring programme [AP 3.1.]:* The Action Plan calls for development and distribution of a unified methodology for counting Aquatic Warblers, implementation of nation-wide surveys and research at breeding/migration/wintering sites.
28. The methodology for monitoring the Aquatic Warbler is regularly discussed at **BirdLife International** Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team annual meetings, as part of an international Aquatic Warbler monitoring programme coordinated in respective Aquatic Warbler Range States

largely by BirdLife International national partners and BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team members. A new scheme for monitoring of Aquatic Warbler breeding population and habitats is being developed within the framework of the EU-LIFE-Nature project “Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany”. If successful, the scheme will be later applied to monitoring Aquatic Warbler breeding sites throughout breeding range.

29. Annual surveys of Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are implemented in **Germany, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia**. In **Belarus, Poland and Ukraine**, because of the large number and size of breeding sites, annual monitoring is conducted on the most important Aquatic Warbler breeding sites with all-country surveys covering all known and potential territories every 3-5 years. The methodology used for Aquatic Warbler counts is everywhere similar to that advised by the Species Action Plan. All countries within the breeding range of the species reported to have either high or full coverage of the territory by Aquatic Warbler surveys. Research on movement during the breeding season/exchange of subpopulations was implemented in Poland (Biebrza and Pomerania) and piloted in Belarus.

30. Intensive research has been implemented at major Aquatic Warbler passage sites in **France and Spain**, where the migrating strategy and requirements of the Aquatic Warbler are studied in order to implement conservation actions at migration sites. In France, migration monitoring methodologies are being standardized with about 30 ringing sites using standard spatial distribution of mist-nets and tape-lure. Species-specific research has also been conducted in **Belgium** where several aspects have been studied with the results yet to be analysed. Ringing of migrating Aquatic Warblers is conducted in **Latvia** (in the framework of the ACROPROJECT) and **Belarus**. DNA sampling of all key Aquatic Warbler sub-populations, as well as on migration, conducted by the **BirdLife International** Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team has allowed the origin of migrating birds to be identified by DNA analysis. On the whole, the extent of coverage of known Aquatic Warbler migration sites by monitoring and the extent of identification of migration sites has been low.

31. The wintering range of the Aquatic Warbler is yet to be identified. **BirdLife International** through its National Partners and the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team members in all countries of the Aquatic Warbler breeding range has run several desk-studies aimed at narrowing down a potential wintering range of the species, including a project funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the UK to study migratory connectivity of Aquatic Warblers using stable isotopes, which have resulted in identification of the very likely wintering sites in Senegal, Mauritania and Mali. On-the-ground confirmation is now required and planned for the beginning of 2007 in line with the strategy for further work of the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team for the search for the wintering grounds of Aquatic Warbler, presented during the Aquatic Warbler Conference in Palencia/Spain 17-20 August 2005. A number of expeditions to find Aquatic Warbler wintering grounds have been initiated independently by ornithologists from **Spain** but without success.

32. *Promotion of research for the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler [AP 3.2.]:* The Action Plans calls for research into different aspects of the ecology of the Aquatic Warbler in different habitats which can help improve conservation of the species and its habitats.

33. Several studies have been implemented in **Poland, Belarus, Germany and Hungary** to study different aspects of breeding ecology of the Aquatic Warblers and identify conservation implications. Habitat structure and water level have been found to play a major role. Thus, appropriate habitat management (mowing grazing burning, etc.) and water level regulation seem to be crucial to the welfare of the breeding populations of the species. Only **Hungary** has Aquatic

Warbler breeding habitats represented by climax communities and which, therefore, do not require any kind of habitat management. Everywhere else cessation of traditional low intensity management (mowing, grazing) together with disturbance of the natural hydrological regime stimulated vegetation successions. Research on habitat requirements of the Aquatic Warbler at migration sites with the aim of subsequent implementation conservation actions is conducted in **France and Spain**.

34. **Development of Aquatic Warbler conservation network [AP 4.1.]:** The Action Plan strives to broaden involvement of organizations and individuals in the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitats.

35. Nationwide networks of organizations and individuals involved in the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler have been established in **Poland** and **Belarus** where they are coordinated by **BirdLife International** national partners. In **Germany** such a network was established under the leadership of the Brandenburg State Office of the Environment. On the international level such a network was established in 1996 in the form of the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team, which unites key Aquatic Warbler experts from across the Aquatic Warbler breeding range. All key Aquatic Warbler experts meet at annual BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team field meetings. Regular Aquatic Warbler Conferences are envisaged in the framework of Aquatic Warbler LIFE projects in **Spain** (held in 2005), **France** (2007) and in **Poland** (2009).

36. **Use of the Aquatic Warbler as a flagship species [AP 4.1.]:** The Action Plan suggests using the Aquatic Warbler – habitat specialists and the most threatened migratory passerine breeding in Europe – as key species for the inventory and protection of lowland marshes and wet meadows.

37. In **Belarus**, thanks to the active promotion of the species and conservation of mires, the recognition of the species is extremely high. In **Poland** the Aquatic Warbler has been used as a flagship species for the inventory and protection of the Biebrza Marshes and the Chelm Marshes on Lublin Polesie. In **Germany** it is a highly prioritised species in Brandenburg. Other countries reported that the Aquatic Warbler is not yet used as a flagship species mostly due to very small size of population.

38. **Promotion of the Aquatic Warbler [AP 4.3.]:** The Action Plan calls for increased awareness about the Aquatic Warbler and the preparation of information and educational materials.

39. Materials specifically devoted to the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler have been published and disseminated in **Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, Spain and France**. In **Germany, Latvia and Poland** information about the Aquatic Warbler was included into materials with a broader conservation context.

4.0 Evaluation

40. Based on the synthesis of the national reports and other available information the following achievements can be recognized:

- The Aquatic Warbler is subject to a very high level of protection throughout its breeding range.

- Breeding habitats of the species are now largely protected, although sometimes the protection level is not sufficient.
- Management planning for key Aquatic Warbler breeding sites is making good progress.
- No potentially detrimental projects have been implemented at Aquatic Warbler breeding/migration/wintering sites since the Memorandum's entry into effect.
- Identification of migration and wintering sites of the Aquatic Warbler has been progressing.
- Key Aquatic Warbler breeding sites are appropriately managed (Zvanets, Dzikaje, Sporava mires in Belarus, Biebrza mire in Poland and Pripiat floodplain in Ukraine). Management planning and Aquatic Warbler targeted management will start for the sharply declining Pomeranian population of the species (Germany, Poland).
- Restoration of habitats for the Aquatic Warbler will be initiated in Belarus, Poland and Germany.
- Monitoring and research on the Aquatic Warbler in the breeding range of the species is actively implemented. There is good cooperation and networking among researchers and conservationists on the national and international level largely due to the work of BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team.
- The coverage of known and potential breeding sites by surveys is very high.
- Awareness raising and promotional campaigns have been launched. The Aquatic Warbler has been broadly publicised.
- Good progress on implementation of country-specific recommended actions has been achieved by countries within breeding range of the Aquatic Warbler.

41. Less progress has been achieved in the following fields:

- The progress to identify migration and wintering sites of the Aquatic Warbler, especially those in Africa, is not yet sufficient to initiate species protection measures at these sites, or the management of its habitats at breeding and wintering grounds.
- Management planning and conservation actions at small Aquatic Warbler breeding sites has yet to be widely undertaken.
- Promotion of the Aquatic Warbler in some countries of the range has been insufficient.

42. There are also issues that raise concern:

- In Germany, there are risks due to the Lower Oder Valley National Park Act (core zone concept). There is hope that the new National Park Act will postpone establishment of the core zone at Aquatic Warbler breeding sites so that land uses crucial to Aquatic Warbler habitat management may continue until substitute areas can be developed. However, the second risk (construction of the new road crossing the National Park) will remain.
- Planned implementation of water management activities – deepening of the riverbed and construction of dykes – in Pripiat floodplain poses a potential threat to the most important Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in Ukraine.
- Belgium's most important stopover site, the decantation pits of Veurne, is threatened by the stopping of the land use.

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF NATIONAL REPORTS FOR THE AQUATIC WARBLER MOU AND ACTION PLAN

This reporting format is designed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan associated with the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*). Reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will support information exchange throughout the range and assist the identification of necessary future actions by the Signatories. The questions presented here go beyond the scope of information already requested from CMS Contracting Parties for national reports to the CMS Conference of the Parties.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Which agency or institution has been primarily responsible for the preparation of this report?
List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input:
Reports submitted to date:
Period covered by this report: from _____ to _____ (dd/mm/yyyy) (dd/mm/yyyy)
Memorandum in effect in Signatory since (dd/mm/yyyy):
Designated Focal Point (and full contact details):

OBJECTIVES

1.0 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE

1.1. *To promote national and international broad policies and legislation which favour the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat*

1.1.1. *Promote the full protection of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitats through national and international legislation*

- a) Is the Aquatic Warbler protected under national legislation in your country?
- Yes, the species is protected and protection level is sufficient
 - Yes, the species is protected, but protection level is not sufficient
 - No, the species is not protected
- b) If Yes, please describe the state of protection and limitations and conservation responsibilities this protection status imposes on the state, conservationists and land-users.
- c) If the Aquatic Warbler is not protected or protection level is not sufficient, please describe what your country is planning to do to ensure highest possible protection of the species.
- d) Is there national legislation in place in your country that ensures effective protection of Aquatic Warbler habitat (breeding, stop-over and wintering sites), including prevention of potentially detrimental activities (drainage, mineral extraction, industry, etc.).
- Yes No
- e) If Yes, please provide details.
- f) If No, please describe measures taken to ensure protection of Aquatic Warbler breeding habitats.

1.1.2. *Seek national or international policy incentives to maintain suitable farming practices at breeding/migration/wintering sites which are impacted by drainage or threatened by succession*

Are there any national or international policy incentives to maintain suitable farming practices at sites occupied by the Aquatic Warbler in your country (agro-environmental schemes, etc.)?

Yes No Country is outside
of breeding range

If yes, please describe briefly the nature of the incentives and whether they are effectively applied or used by farmers and land-managers.

If no, please describe what measures are being taken to ensure availability of such incentives.

2.0 SPECIES AND HABITAT PROTECTION

2.1. *To promote adequate protection of sites occupied by the Aquatic Warbler and remove key factors adversely affecting the habitat*

2.1.1. *Seek designation as protected areas of all sites regularly holding breeding Aquatic Warblers.*

- a) In the table attached (Annex I), please provide details for all regularly occupied Aquatic Warbler sites in your country and indicate their protection status (*please expand the table if necessary*).
- b) If Aquatic Warbler sites currently are not fully protected or protection level is not sufficient, please provide information about constraints and what your country is planning to do to ensure full and adequate protection of these sites.
- c) If Site Management Plans have not been developed for all Aquatic Warbler sites, please describe what hampers development of Management Plans and what your country is doing to ensure development, approval and implementation of Site Management Plans for regular Aquatic Warbler sites.
- d) Please advise what assistance you would require to complete or improve existing Site Management Plans.

2.1.2. *Prevent habitat alteration, habitat fragmentation, pollution and other factors that could be detrimental to the Aquatic Warbler in sites it regularly occupies for breeding/migration/wintering.*

- a) Are new *development* projects that could potentially have a detrimental effect on current or potential Aquatic Warbler sites (such as drainage, peat extraction, construction of highways, etc.) subject to environmental impact assessment in your country?
 Yes No
- b) Have there been any potentially detrimental projects *implemented* in any Aquatic Warbler habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding?
 Yes No
- c) If yes, indicate sites involved, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.
- d) Has implementation of any potentially detrimental project in any Aquatic Warbler habitat in your country been *halted* since signing this Memorandum of Understanding?
 Yes No
- e) If Yes, please give details.

2.2. ***To manage the breeding habitat to increase numbers, productivity and distribution and manage migration and wintering sites.***

2.2.1. *Regulate water levels and restore natural water conditions*

- a) Has water management been implemented at Aquatic Warbler breeding/migration/wintering sites in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, please describe actions taken, sites involved and effects expected/achieved.
- c) What constraints are limiting implementation of these activities at other sites in need of effective water management?

2.2.2. *Prevent natural succession of the vegetation by undertaking management where necessary*

- a) Has vegetation management been undertaken at Aquatic Warbler breeding/migration/wintering sites in your country to prevent natural succession?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, please describe actions taken (mowing, bush-removing, etc), what equipment was used for vegetation management and how efficient it was. Please refer to reports if available and comparative analysis of different types of equipment if it was conducted.
- c) If No, what constraints are limiting vegetation management at other sites where it is needed and what is your country doing to ensure proper vegetation management at Aquatic Warbler breeding sites?

2.2.3. *Hand-scything and mowing*

- a) If historical information is available, please describe to which extent current Aquatic Warbler breeding sites were hand scythed and mown.
- b) Are hand-scything and mowing being applied for habitat conservation for the Aquatic Warbler in your country?
 Yes No
- c) If Yes, please describe how this was approached, which sites were involved and the area covered. Please provide details if conservation effect of hand-scything and mowing has been evaluated. Please refer to published materials if available.
- d) What constraints are limiting hand-scything and mowing at sites where extensive habitat management is needed?

2.2.4. *Controlled burning*

- a) Is controlled burning a legal habitat management tool in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, is burning used as a habitat management tool for Aquatic Warbler? Please describe actions taken, sites involved and effects achieved or expected. Please refer to published materials if information regarding the effects of controlled burning has been summarized and published.
- c) If No, then what actions are being undertaken to legalize controlled burning?

2.2.5. *Grazing*

- a) Has grazing been used for habitat management at Aquatic Warbler sites in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If yes, please describe which animals are used, which sites are involved and what effects are expected/achieved. Please give reference to published materials if information regarding the effects of grazing has been summarized and published.

2.2.6. *Disseminate habitat management recommendations to land managers*

- a) Are Aquatic Warbler habitat management recommendations being disseminated to land managers and other interested parties in your country?

Yes No Country is outside of breeding range

- b) If Yes, please describe ways of dissemination of habitat management recommendations to land managers used: events, publications, etc. Please give reference to published materials.
- c) If No, then what constraints are limiting dissemination of habitat management recommendations and what should be done to overcome these constraints?
- d) Please advise if there is successful experience other Range States can draw on and what assistance your country would require to help share this information.

2.3. ***To protect the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat in the winter quarters and along the migration route***

2.3.1. *Promote the protection and appropriate management of wintering and passage sites*

- a) In the table attached (Annex I), please provide details about major Aquatic Warbler passage and wintering sites in your country (*please expand the table if necessary*)

- b) Are primary Aquatic Warbler passage/wintering sites appropriately managed in your country?

Fully Partially No

- c) Please list on-going and implemented projects and provide brief information about results achieved.
- d) What are the remaining gaps and what is your country planning to do to ensure sufficient protection and management of primary passage/wintering sites?

2.4. ***To restore habitats for the Aquatic Warbler***

2.4.1. *Undertake the ecological restoration of potential breeding sites of the Aquatic Warbler*

- a) Have potential or irregularly occupied Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in your country been evaluated?

Fully Partially No Country is outside of breeding range

- b) If Yes, what initiatives aimed at ecological restoration of potential breeding sites have been undertaken in your country? Which sites are involved and what effects are expected/achieved?
- c) If No, what are the constraints and which actions should be taken in order to overcome these constraints?

3.0 MONITORING AND RESEARCH

3.1. To develop and implement a monitoring programme enabling population trends to be tracked

3.1.1. Distribution of a methodology for counting Aquatic Warblers

- a) Is the methodology adopted for counting Aquatic Warblers used on the national level *different* to what is advised in the Aquatic Warbler Species Action Plan?
- Yes No No methodology is adapted
- b) If Yes, please describe briefly possible differences and amendments.
- c) Does your country have experience applying this methodology and what can be learned from this experience?
- d) What does your country do to distribute and familiarize relevant institutions/specialists with this methodology?

3.1.2. Undertake national surveys to estimate breeding populations

- a) Have national (all-country) surveys of Aquatic Warbler breeding population been undertaken in your country?
- Yes (give years) _____
- No
- Country is outside of breeding range
- b) If Yes, what methodology is used (full counts, transect counts, etc.) and what organization was coordinating the survey?
- c) What is the size and trend of the national breeding population (vocalizing males)? Please refer to published materials if applicable.

Year of survey:	Year of survey:	Year of survey:
Population size:	Population size:	Population size:

- d) If Yes, to which extent was the territory of your country covered by the survey:
- Fully (> 90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
- High (60-90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
- Medium (30-60 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
- Low (< 30 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
- e) When is the next national (all-country) survey of the Aquatic Warbler planned in your country?
- f) If no national surveys have been conducted, please indicate existing constraints and what you country going to do to ensure that national surveys of the Aquatic Warbler are conducted?

3.1.3. *Collect data at the major known passage sites and identify further resting sites*

- a) Have studies at known Aquatic Warbler passage sites been conducted in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, please describe briefly, which major passage sites are being monitored, what monitoring is being conducted (Aquatic Warbler population, habitat parameters, impact assessment, migration strategy, etc) and which organizations are involved?
- c) What are the main findings and what conservation implications do they have?
- d) If Yes, to what extent are major known Aquatic Warbler passage sites are being monitored in your country?
- Fully (> 90% of known sites)
 - High (60-90 % of known sites)
 - Medium (30-60 % of known sites)
 - Low (< 30 % of known sites)
- f) To what extent have major Aquatic Warbler passage sites been identified in your country?
- Fully (> 90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - High (60-90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Medium (30-60 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Low (< 30 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - No monitoring is conducted
- g) What are the gaps and what is your country doing to address them?

3.1.4. *Identify major wintering areas*

- a) Have studies aimed at identifying Aquatic Warbler wintering areas have been conducted in your country?
 Yes No Country is outside of wintering range
- b) If Yes, what are the main findings and conservation implications? If available, please refer to published reports.
- c) If Yes, To what extent was the territory of your country covered by the survey of wintering areas?
- Fully (> 90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - High (60-90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Medium (30-60 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Low (< 30 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
- d) If wintering sites have been identified, to what extend are these sites being monitored during migration?
- Fully (> 90% of known sites)
 - High (60-90 % of known sites)
 - Medium (30-60 % of known sites)
 - Low (< 30 % of known sites)
 - No monitoring is conducted

- e) If your country is outside of Aquatic Warbler wintering range, which international initiatives aimed at identification of Aquatic Warbler wintering grounds has your country been involved in? What are the main findings?
- f) What are the gaps and what needs to be done to help address them?

3.1.5. *Research into habitat characteristics at migration and wintering sites*

- a) Has research into habitat characteristics at migration and/or wintering sites been conducted in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, please provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.
- c) What are the main findings and conservation implications?
- d) What are the remaining gaps and what needs to be done to address them?

3.1.6. *Research on movements during the breeding season / exchange of subpopulations*

Has research on Aquatic Warbler movements during breeding season/exchange of subpopulations been conducted in your country?

Yes No Country is outside of breeding range

If Yes, please describe which territories were covered, what methods were used (colour ringing, radio-tagging, etc.) and what were the main findings. Please give reference to published materials if available.

If Yes, was the research on movements during the breeding season coordinated with researchers from neighbouring Aquatic Warbler Range States.

Yes No

If the research hasn't been conducted, what is your country planning to do to initiate such cooperation?

3.1.7. *Develop and implement an international monitoring programme*

Is your country participating in development and/or implementation of international Aquatic Warbler monitoring programmes?

Yes No

If Yes, please list on-going and completed projects and indicate which areas they focus on and which other countries are involved. Please provide reference to published results if available.

Are there areas that haven't been properly addressed, if so, what needs to be done to assist your country in addressing these gaps?

3.2. To promote research useful for the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler in the future

3.2.1. Undertake comparative studies on breeding success and population recruitment in different habitats

- a) Have studies on breeding success and population recruitment in different habitats been conducted in your country?
- Yes, in collaboration with other Range States
 - Yes, on the national scale
 - No comparative studies have been conducted
 - Country is outside of breeding range
- b) If available, please list on-going and completed studies and give reference to published reports.
- c) What are the main findings of these studies?
- d) Are there any future comparative studies your country is able to initiate? What would be needed to do this?
- e) If no comparative studies are being implemented, what is your country planning to do to stimulate this research and what assistance would be required?

3.2.2. Assess the effect of burning, scything, mowing, grazing and water conditions on breeding populations

- a) Effect of which of the following factors and potential habitat management techniques on Aquatic Warbler breeding population was assessed in your country?
- Controlled burning
 - Scything
 - Mowing
 - Water conditions
 - Other _____ (what)
 - No assessment has been conducted
- b) What are the main findings and conservation implications? If available, please give reference to published reports.
- c) Are there any gaps? What limits further assessment of this factor's effects?

3.2.3. Develop collaborative research and monitoring programmes between range-states

- a) Is your country involved in international collaborative and monitoring programmes on the Aquatic Warbler?
- Yes No
- b) If yes, please provide brief details about on-going and completed projects. Which Aquatic Warbler range states are involved? What fields studied?
- c) What are the main findings and conservation implications?
- d) What are the gaps and what is needed to address them?

4.0 PUBLIC AWARENESS

4.1. *To ensure development of a strong network of organisations and individuals committed to the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler*

- a) Does a network of organisations/individuals committed to the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler exist in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, how broad is this network and what organizations/individuals are taking the lead in facilitation and coordination of its development?
- c) What actions does your country undertake to broaden the circle of organisations and individuals committed to conservation of Aquatic Warbler?
- d) What successful experience can other Range States draw on?
- e) What would be needed to establish a network if it does not already exist or to improve an existing one?
- f) In the table attached (Annex II), please list key people in your country (scientists, conservationists, etc.) who are dealing with Aquatic Warbler conservation, research and implementation of the Aquatic Warbler MoU and Action Plan.

4.2. *To use the Aquatic Warbler as a flagship species*

Has the Aquatic Warbler been used as a flagship species in your country for the inventory and protection of wetlands?

Yes No

If Yes, please briefly describe how and provide examples if available.

If No, what limits promotion and use of the Aquatic Warbler as a flagship species and how does your country plan to address this?

4.3. *To prepare educational materials promoting and giving information*

- a) Have any educational and promotional materials about Aquatic Warbler been developed in your country?
- Yes, specifically devoted to the Aquatic Warbler.
 - Yes, the Aquatic Warbler is included into materials with a broader context.
 - No, Aquatic Warbler is not covered in educational and promotional materials.

If Yes, please describe the nature of such materials and how they were disseminated. Please give reference to published materials if available.

If No, please describe what limits development of such materials and give details about what your country is planning to do to promote Aquatic Warbler and its conservation.

PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Please report on the implementation of the country-specific actions listed for your country in Part II of the Action Plan and provide information if that is not already covered by your answers under Part I. Please describe not only the measures taken but also their impact on the Aquatic Warbler or its habitat in the context of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. Where you have already answered on country-specific actions in Part I, please only add a reference to the relevant answer here.

Annex I

Name of the site, geographical coordinates	Status (B – breeding, W – wintering P – passage)	Aquatic Warbler population supported (vocalizing males (breeding) or individuals (migration or wintering))	Year of survey	Total area of the site	Area of the site under protection	Type of protection	Does protection level fully reject possible detrimental developments? [Yes/No]	Site Management Plan (D – developed, A - approved, I – implemented)

Name	Title	Field of interest	Position, Organization	Contact address and email	Comments



**Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species
of Wild Animals**



**FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE
AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)**

*Lower Oder Valley National Park, Criewen, Germany
25-27 June 2006*

CMS/AW-1/Report
Annex 7

PRIORITY PROJECTS LIST

*(To support implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding
concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)
and Action Plan)*

Note by the CMS Secretariat

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Signatories are to implement the provisions of the Action Plan as a basis for conserving all populations of the species.
2. The purpose of the Priority Projects List is to coordinate conservation activities in some areas of high conservation concern that still require urgent intervention. The list is designed to assist in focusing limited international, national and other funds for the most immediate conservation impact. It will also form the basis for targeted fundraising campaigns nationally and internationally.
3. The Priority Projects List has been endorsed by the First Meeting of the Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (Criewen, 2006).
4. The activities presented in the list will implement “high priority” action points within the Action Plan. However, the activities have been further prioritised depending on the threats targeted and other conservation needs. A column on financial considerations is provided, but exact figures have not been indicated pending further development of the project concepts. Funding would be secured through funding applications prepared by lead countries and collaborators.
5. The primary responsibility for developing and implementing the listed projects will rest with the lead country governments, as well as each country’s non-governmental community and its individual Aquatic Warbler experts. Relevant intergovernmental, international and national organisations would be invited to consider collaborating on the projects themselves. The MoU’s International Aquatic Warbler Flyway Coordinator (AWCO) would provide technical and other support on request to support the project development and implementation processes.
6. The Priority Projects List will be updated on a rolling basis and circulated by the AWCO, in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, to reflect updated information such as funding secured to implement a particular project. Between regular meetings of the MoU Signatories new project priorities would be added to the list in consultation with the MoU focal point of the targeted country.

**Priority Projects List to Support Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding
concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) and Action Plan**

*Endorsed by the First Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler
(Acrocephalus paludicola), Criewen, Germany, 25-27 June 2006*

(as at July 2006)

Project Title	Rationale	Other Range States Involved	Action Plan Target	Priority	Est. Cost	Comments
1.0 Breeding Range						
Belarus						
1.1 Implementation of urgent conservation actions at key AW breeding sites in Belarus	Management plans for three largest Belarus sites have been compiled and require constant habitat management to be implemented		2.4	Very high	€€€' €€€	To supplement the existing GEF Polesie project
1.2 Restoring valuable habitats for globally threatened species – management planning and implementation of conservation actions at degraded or abandoned AW breeding sites	Many sites have been abandoned because of habitat fragmentation, vegetation succession, etc. A network of breeding sites should be recreated in order to ensure stability of the species		2.4.1	High	€€€' €€€	
1.3 Modelling distribution of globally threatened species confined to non-forest ecosystems by satellite image analysis - mapping potential AW breeding sites in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine	Identification of potential AW breeding sites by remote sensing can significantly decrease resources needed for ground verification	UKR, RUS	3.1.2	Moderate	€€€' €€€	
Germany						
1.4 Implementation of conservation measures in Lower Oder Valley National Park according to the research results on key AW habitat requirements	German AW population is critically endangered	POL	2.1 & 2.2	Very high	€€€' €€€	Follow up activity to the existing research project funded by DBU
Latvia						
1.5 Implementation of conservation measures at key AW breeding sites in Lake Lijepaja	All AW breeding sites in the Baltic region are threatened because of abandonment	LVA, RUS (Kaliningrad)	2.1 & 2.2	High	€€€' €€€	

Project Title	Rationale	Other Range States Involved	Action Plan Target	Priority	Est. Cost	Comments
Lithuania						
1.6 Implementation of conservation measures at key AW breeding sites in Curonian lagoon and Zuvintas biosphere reserve	All AW breeding sites in the Baltic region are threatened by abandonment	LVA, RUS (Kaliningrad)	2.1 & 2.2	High	€€€' €€€	
Poland						
1.7 Conservation actions at the Lublin marshes and the Narew floodplain	Lublin marshes are the second largest AW breeding site in Poland and the EU, supporting up to 600 vocalizing males	BLR (Narew)	2.1 & 2.2	High	€€€' €€€	
1.8 Inventory of all small breeding sites	Small sites could be important for the recovery of the population	UKR, BEL	3.1.2	High POL – very high Very high (POL)	€€€' €€€	Focus would be on sites thought to have been lost 10 years ago due to abandonment and succession; There are possibilities to obtain EU funds for conservation
1.9 Identification, restoration plan development and restoration of potential/former AW breeding sites in Pomerania	A network of breeding sites for the endangered Pomeranian population of the AW must be re-established	GER	2.4.1	Very high	€€€' €€€	
Russia						
1.10 Identify and ground survey potential AW breeding sites in European Russia	So far, no stable AW breeding sites in European Russia have been identified despite suitable habitat conditions		A.P. 2.1.1	High	€€€' €€€	Initially in the course of the annual activities / field meetings of the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (AWCT)
Ukraine						
1.11 Management planning (including full environmental impact assessment of economic development activities) and implementation of urgent conservation actions at key AW breeding sites in Pripyat and Desna-Dniepr floodplains	The project is aimed at developing and implementing priority conservation actions at AW breeding sites in Ukraine, where active conservation has not yet taken place		2.2	Very high	€€€' €€€	Project on management planning for Desna-Dniepr population has been submitted to SEPS Ukraine (British Council)

Project Title	Rationale	Other Range States Involved	Action Plan Target	Priority	Est. Cost	Comments
1.12 DNA sampling of small AW population in Western Ukraine (near the Polish border) to determine inbreeding depression	There are signs of inbreeding depression in neighbouring Lublin population		3.1	Moderate	€€€' €€€	Concerns Chornoguzka Valley and Lakes Beloje and Pesochnoje
1.13 Finalization and approval of AW National Species Action Plans	National Species Action Plans are essential for AW conservation	BLR, POL, UKR	1.1	Moderate	€€€' €€€	For POL – National Species Action Plan is under development
2.0 Migration						
2.1 Inventory of European/African (Morocco, Mauritania) migration sites – their protection status and conservation situation	Detrimental developments at important migration stopovers of the AW currently pose a serious threat to the species; wintering sites may be threatened by demographic pressures and habitat modifications	All countries within migration range	2.3.1; 3.1.3 & 3.1.5	Very high	€€€' €€€	Desk study and site visits.
2.2 Synopsis and analysis of all existing AW ringing and recovery data	Analysis of ringing and recovery data will provide more information on migration pattern and strategy and is important to develop population models	All AW range states	3.1.3 & 3.1.4	Very high	€€€' €€€	Negative results also important; Observations should be included; Contact all ringing centres and rarity committees; Where possible – information of capture methods and habitat should be collected
2.3 Balkan Flyway of the AW – research and conservation	There are hints that there could exist another flyway of the Aquatic Warbler	UKR, BGR	3.1.3 & 3.1.5	Moderate	€€€' €€€	
3.0 Wintering Range						
3.1 Desk study (satellite image analysis) of known and potential AW wintering sites in Africa	Application of remote sensing techniques can help further narrow down potential AW wintering areas or find similar sites once AW wintering has been confirmed.	All countries within wintering range	3.1.4 & 3.1.5	Very high	€€€' €€€	
3.2 Ground check potential AW wintering sites in West Africa	It is crucial to identify wintering sites in order to identify potential threats and bottlenecks	SEN, MRT, MLI	3.1.4	Very high	€€€' €€€	AWCT 2007 expedition to West Africa, starting from Senegal to develop a standardised methodology; Using mist-netting and tape

Project Title	Rationale	Other Range States Involved	Action Plan Target	Priority	Est. Cost	Comments
						lures; opportunities exist for capacity building in wintering countries
3.3 Review of protection status and conservation situation of identified AW wintering sites in Africa	Detrimental developments at important wintering sites of the AW are one of the most serious threats to the AW	MRT, SEN, MLI, GNB	2.3.1	Very high	€€€' €€€	Conditioned by successful implementation of 3.1
3.4 Develop management plans and implement urgent conservation measures for identified African wintering areas and migration stop-over sites	Once identified, major migration stopovers and wintering sites need to be appropriately managed	MLI, MRT, SEN	3.1.4 & 3.1.5	Very high	€€€' €€€	Conditioned by successful implementation of 3.1
4.0 General						
4.1 Second Meeting of Signatories (2009)	Signatories meetings should be conducted regularly pursuant to MoU paragraph 3 to assess the implementation of the MoU and the Action Plan	All Signatories		High	€€€' €€€	Proposed to take place in Poland during the LIFE project meeting (2009); opportunities may exist for collaboration with Lithuania (e.g., AW scientific symposium, excursion, etc.)
4.2 AWCT support for annual research work	BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team is taking the lead in research and conservation of the AW	All Signatories	3.1 & 4.1	High	€€€' €€€	
4.3 AW small grants for monitoring, pilot conservation and action plans	Small grants are a very cost-effective method of stimulating research and conservation	All Signatories	3.1 & 3.2	High	€€€' €€€	
4.4 BirdLife/CMS International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Officer (AWCO)	AWCO provides assistance to the CMS Secretariat, BirdLife International and national conservation organizations to support implementation of the Aquatic Warbler MoU	All Signatories	4.1	Very high	€€€' €€€	Funding for interim MoU coordination and other AW activities expires at the end of 2006. Stable multi-year funding sought.

Signatories/ non-Signatories	Actions requested of Signatories/Non-Signatories			
	Considerations regarding signature of MoU (by non-Signatories)	National Contact Point Yes = officially nominated No = no nomination received yet	National Report availability (E):electronic format (W): MS-Word version only (electronic) (W)(p): MS-Word version paper copy only (H): hand written notes only IC: yet to be completed and submitted	Other
Signatories				
Belarus		Yes	(W): completed	
Belgium		Yes	(W): completed	
Bulgaria		Yes	(W): completed	
Germany		Yes	(W): completed	
Hungary		Yes	(W): completed	
Latvia		Yes	(W): completed	
Lithuania		No	(W): completed	Poland's representative offered to explore the opportunity to host the next meeting of the MoU in 2009. A possible cross-border meeting with Lithuania was proposed and Lithuania's representative offered to explore this.
Poland		Yes	(W): completed	
Senegal		Yes	(W): completed	
Ukraine		Yes	(W): completed	
United Kingdom		Yes	(W): completed	
Spain		Yes	IC:	
Non-Signatories				
France	The Secretariat invited the government to sign the MoU at the meeting; no official written response was received. The meeting invited France to consider signing the MoU as soon as possible.			

Signatories/ non-Signatories	Actions requested of Signatories/Non-Signatories			
	Considerations regarding signature of MoU (by non-Signatories)	National Contact Point Yes = officially nominated No = no nomination received yet	National Report availability (E):electronic format (W): MS-Word version only (electronic) (W)(p): MS-Word version paper copy only (H): hand written notes only IC: yet to be completed and submitted	Other
Netherlands	In response to an invitation from the Secretariat the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality indicated by email dated 2 November 2005 that the issue was under consideration but that it will not be in a position to sign the MoU at the meeting. The meeting invited the Netherlands to consider signing the MoU as soon as possible.			
Russian Federation	The Secretariat invited the government to sign the MoU at the meeting; no official written response was received. The meeting invited the Russian Federation to consider signing the MoU as soon as possible.		(W): completed	

Last updated: November 2006