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MEETING TO CONCLUDE AND ENDORSE THE
PROPOSED CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY ACTION
PLAN TO CONSERVE MIGRATORY
WATERBIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS
New Delhi, 10-13 June 2005
Agenda Item 5.0

COUNTRY REPORT GUIDELINES

Meeting to Conclude and Endorse the Proposed Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for Waterbirds and their Habitat

(10-13 June 2005, New Delhi, India)

Guidelines for Country Reports

I. Introduction

The region of Central and South Asia encompasses one of the world's greatest but least known bird migration routes. Tens of millions of individuals of Arctic nesting species, the most conspicuous of them waterbirds, migrate through the region to the Middle East and Africa and to the Indian subcontinent. The region also holds crucially important wintering populations of some waterbird species (e.g. *Netta rufina*, *Fulica atra*) and is a key breeding area for others (e.g. *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*, *Tadorna ferruginea*). Globally threatened waterbirds (IUCN 1996) are represented in the region by *Pelecanus crispus*, *Anser erythropus*, *Branta ruficollis*, *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, *Aythya nyroca*, *Oxyura leucocephala*, *Crex crex*, and *Vanellus gregarius*.

The Central Asian Flyway (CAF) comprises several important migration routes, most of which extend from Siberia to Indian subcontinent thus covering large intra-continental territories between the Arctic and Indian Oceans. The birds on their annual migration cross international borders of several countries. This continental flyway comprises large semi-arid habitats with limited wetlands, particularly in the staging areas and different groups of migratory waterbirds appear to overlap considerably in the usage of important sites. Many countries along the CAF have developing economies with inadequate allocation of resources for research and conservation. Many of the wetlands are situated in areas with dense human populations where they are actively and unsustainably exploited by man. The wetlands and waterbirds are consequently very threatened along the CAF, and therefore in need of science-based and internationally co-ordinated conservation measures.

It is well known that migratory waterbirds are a national heritage within the countries of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF). The fact that they migrate beyond national jurisdictions make them an international resource as well. Consequently, nations within the CAF have a joint responsibility for the protection and conservation of migratory birds and their wetland habitats.

A second meeting of the Central Asian Flyway countries is being organized in March 2005 under the aegis of the Convention on Migratory Species to agree on a framework for international cooperation and conservation of migratory waterbirds.

To develop a framework to undertake this work it is necessary to have a better understanding of the international aspects of migratory waterbirds in the CAF including their management and conservation issues when they migrate beyond country jurisdictions. For this, it is proposed that a flyway-wide overview be prepared based on country reports. This overview is also focused on presenting information to assist flyway countries to determine who to work with, why, and how to work together to resolve migratory waterbird conservation issues of mutual concern.

II. Goals

- Facilitate Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration within the CAF.
- Enhance the flyway approach to migratory waterbird and wetland conservation.

III. Objectives

- Document the country's domestic legislation, programs, and administrative structures for migratory waterbird conservation.
- Document the country's formal and informal international bird instruments.
- Document the country's ongoing and proposed projects that deal with waterbird research, monitoring, awareness, management and related issues being undertaken by government, technical institutions, NGOs and others.
- Determine the regular breeding waterbirds that migrate beyond a country's boundary.
- Determine the status and trends of the waterbirds listed in the above objective.
- Determine the country's and flyways' waterbirds of conservation concern

IV. Project Approach

- Wetlands International offers to coordinate the work at the flyway level and will collate information provided by governments and other partners.
- National governments will provide a country report in response to a questionnaire that is provided by CMS.
- Wetlands International will present an overview of this information at the forthcoming flyway meeting in New Delhi.
- A mechanism for the finalization, review and dissemination of the CAF overview will be discussed at the forthcoming flyway meeting in New Delhi.

Questionnaire Guidelines for Country Reports for Central Asian Flyway Overview

A. Brief Introduction

B. National administrative structures for migratory waterbirds and wetlands

This section provides a brief overview of the national and subnational (provincial/state) administrative agencies and structures that are responsible for migratory waterbird and wetland management and conservation.

Table 1: National administrative structures responsible for managing migratory waterbirds and wetlands

Name of Agency (with contact details)	Geographic scope	Thematic Focus	Principle outputs on waterbirds and wetlands

C. National policy and legislation relating to migratory waterbirds and wetlands

This section provides a brief overview of the national and subnational policies and legislation that relate to migratory waterbird and wetlands. A list of regulations that relate to hunting or take of migratory species should be provided.

D. National government institutions involved in migratory waterbirds and wetlands research/management

This section provides a brief overview of the government institutions whose scope includes research, management, awareness-raising and conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands. This information will provide the basis for identification of institutions that could lead or be involved in cooperative projects.

Table 2: National government institutions involved in migratory waterbirds and wetlands research/management

Name of Institution (with contact details)	Geographic scope	Thematic Focus or programmes	Principle outputs on waterbirds and wetlands

E. Main non-government organizations and academic institutions involved in migratory waterbirds and wetlands research/management

This section provides a brief overview of the non-government organizations and academic bodies involved in research, management, awareness-raising and conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands. This information will provide the basis for identification of organizations that could lead or be involved in cooperative projects.

Table 3: Main non-government organizations and academic institutions involved in migratory waterbirds and wetlands research/management

Name of non-government organization/ University (with contact details)	Geographic scope	Thematic Focus or programmes	Principle outputs on waterbirds and wetlands

F. International Instruments

This discussion and table will highlight those international (Treaties/Agreements) that are relevant to your country's list of breeding waterbirds documented in Table 6. It is envisioned that bilateral and multilateral bird treaties and informal agreements would be described. As indicated in the Table 4, the scope, bird themes or focuses, and whether there is an implementing Action Plan associated with the instrument will be reported.

Table 4: Main International Instruments (Treaties/Agreements) that are relevant to the migratory waterbirds and wetlands of the country

Instruments – formal	Geographic scope	Thematic Focus	Implementing Strategy or Action Plan

G. International Programs and Activities

This discussion and table highlights each country's international waterbird program/activities/actions/projects. It should indicate the applicable geographic region, cooperating country, instrument and partners, and whether there are reports available (See Table 5).

Table 5: International activities involving the countries migratory waterbirds (initiated in or since 2000, earlier programmes may also be included)

Activity	Waterbird Group	International partners	Principle outputs

H. List of Regular Breeding and Migratory Waterbirds

To accomplish this section, each country's author needs to compile a table of regular waterbird breeders (not vagrants) that migrate outside the legal jurisdiction of the country. In addition, the table will need to specify regular migratory waterbird species (not vagrants) that visit the country. The information in these tables should be summarized in a short narrative. This table will form the foundation of the report. A master reference list of CAF migratory waterbirds and their population estimates will be provided by Wetlands International.

I. Migration Routes, Staging Sites, and Non-breeding Areas

This section is a description and table of the key breeding areas, key staging areas and non-breeding areas of the country's waterbirds.

Where specific information on the migration routes of waterbirds is available, a brief description may be provided, supported by references to published or unpublished literature and maps.

This information would provide a basis to highlight those regions/countries that your country needs to communicate/coordinate/collaborate with to ensure their conservation. With this information it will be possible to indicate those non-breeding regions/countries that are of highest priority. It also serves to connect with the discussion concerning International instruments.

J. Waterbirds of CAF Conservation Concern (WCC)

This section will provide an opportunity to recognize those waterbird species that are of the highest priority in the country. Criteria to make that determination will be developed and used by each country. If a country has already done this exercise it is not recommended to invent a new list just for this report. Suggested criteria will be: breeding distribution; non-breeding distribution; relative abundance; population trends; threats on the breeding and non-breeding grounds; and country or area importance to the species (percentage of the breeding population in your country). Each country should describe, in adequate detail, how the WCC list was developed.

The next step will be to develop a list of priority species called the "Waterbirds of CAF Conservation Concern" on criteria that will be discussed at the CAF meeting.

K. Recommendations to Improve International Migratory Waterbird Conservation

The section will include a discussion summarizing the key information in the tables and discussions; and then list the recommended improvements (new instruments/projects/working groups) needed to improve the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the country and flyway.