

Wageningen, 23 November 2001.

**To: Standing Committee
Bonn Convention.**

**Via: Secretariat of the Bonn Convention
Martin Luther King Str. 8.
D-53175 BONN
Germany**

Issue: Global Waterbird Flyway Conference.

Wetlands International is kindly requesting, at your meeting on 13 and 14 December 2001, your attention for the following:

In early 2004, probably February, Wetlands International will organise, with the Netherlands Government as host, an International Conference:

**“ Waterbirds Around the World “ ,
(a global review of the conservation, management and research of the world 's major flyways).**

The conference aims to present an overview of all the ongoing initiatives related to flyway conservation of waterbirds in general but also groups of species or single species activities such as for the Siberian Crane. Details on the objectives, the organisation, expected outputs etc. are presented in the attached Consultation Announcement.

The total, draft budget, is expected to be EURO 343.000.-

The Netherlands Government has indicated that it will be able to support the meeting with about EURO 90.000.- (to be confirmed in writing) and further funding will be needed.

The initial consultation with a number of experts in this field and with appropriate organisations and countries, makes it clear that this initiative is received with great enthusiasm and support. Positive reactions and endorsements, and promises of support (various kinds) have already been received from the Ramsar Convention, UK Government, ICF (USA), WWT (UK), USGS (USA) and many individual scientists and scientific institutions in this field.

The Bonn Convention should play a very important role in this conference as it will focus on the main objective of the convention: the conservation and sustainable management of migratory species. To this end Wetlands International would be very pleased if the Standing Committee of the Bonn Convention could:

- Formally endorse the conference (and be mentioned in the First Announcement)
- Provide financial support to organise the conference
- Agree with making modest time and resources available from the Secretariat and Scientific Council of the Bonn Convention to be involved in the conference by accepting the membership of the Organising Committee and the Scientific Committee.

Next steps will be taken in the first half of 2002 when the Committees will be established and the First Announcement prepared and circulated.

Dr. Gerard C. Boere is the responsible staff member within Wetlands International and will attend, as before, the Standing Committee to provide further information.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Nash,
International Director

Consultation Announcement.

(18 September 2001)

“Waterbirds Around the World”

A global review of the conservation, management and research of the worlds major flyways.

early 2004, Wageningen, The Netherlands

hosted

by

**Government of the Netherlands
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries
Department for Nature Management**

Supported by:

[to be determined]

In co-operation with:

[to be determined]

Endorsed by:

[to be determined]

Technical and Scientific organisation:

Wetlands International

P.O Box 471

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The Netherlands.

Project summary

**Host: Government of the Netherlands
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries**

Technical and Scientific organisation: Wetlands International

**Location: International Conference Centre Wageningen,
The Netherlands.**

Dates: early 2004

Total budget: EURO 343.000

Exp. Income from regular conference fees: EURO 30.000.-

Funding required: EURO 313.000.-

Announced contribution Dutch Government: EURO 90.000.- (formal letter awaiting)

Remains to be funded: EURO 223.000.-

Waterbirds Around the World”

A global review of the conservation, management and research of the worlds major flyways.

Background.

Migration of animals is a phenomenon well known among the general public and has for long attracted the attention of (subsistence) hunters, conservationists (both governmental and non-governmental) and researchers. In particularly bird migration, with its annual mass movements of tenths of millions of birds across the continent, is fascinating. Among the many groups of migratory birds, those bird species migrating in large numbers and concentrating within restricted geographical boundaries, have always attracted most attention because they are well visible, attractive for subsistence hunters and, in more recent times, for recreational bird watching.

Examples are most waterbird species such as Anatidae and waders (shorebirds) in particular,, but also birds of prey, storks and passerine birds under specific geographical conditions such as a pass through the mountains or river valleys in an arid surrounding. The specific problems for migratory species has been recognised by the national governments and international community and as a result the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Bonn Convention (1979) was established and came into force in 1983; 2004 is the 25th Anniversary of concluding the Bonn Convention and the 5th of coming into force of African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement.

Anyway the concept of a flyway, as it is now widely used, is mainly based on the migratory behaviour of waterbirds such as geese, ducks and waders; many species of which migrate along rather well defined routes while for decades using the same wetlands as stop-over and wintering sites.

The last 30 years waterbirds have received much attention, in a structural way through various organisations such as the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (now Wetlands International). In the past waterbird conservation was one of the two pillars for the development of the Ramsar Convention (1971). The North American Waterfowl Management Plan also was a major step towards the co-ordination of waterbird conservation and sustainable use and inspired similar activities in other parts of the world. The African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (the Hague 1995), under the Bonn Convention, is one of the latest examples of a co-ordinated large scale, flyway conservation activity; many more initiatives are in various stages of preparation and implementation such as the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, Central Asian Indian Flyway Project, Siberina Crane Flyway Programme etc.

By definition waterbird migration connects the continents and their conservation and management is a challenge for all those involved. Conservation and research of waterbirds and their flyways clearly is only possible on the basis of good co-operation on a global level. Many species of migratory waterbirds have a global distribution

Several international conferences on the conservation and research of birds have had sections addressing research and conservation of migratory species. Good examples are some workshops during the global Wetlands International Conferences. Some other conferences paid much attention to research of migratory species. So far there has been no single international meeting addressing all aspects of global waterbird flyway conservation in a reviewing and comprehensive way.

Scope of the conference.

“Waterbirds Around the World”, will focus on all major themes and developments related to the global conservation of flyways of waterbirds during their full annual cycle: breeding areas, stop-over sites and wintering areas. It will address achievements of the last 25 years and formulate gaps and needs for initiatives to stimulate future conservation of the worlds flyways and the species and habitats involved.

Waterbirds, in the sense of this conference, means all species of ducks, geese, waders (shorebirds) as well a number of gull and tern species clearly related to freshwater and coastal habitats; for practical reasons the conference includes all species, sub-species and populations as described in the Wetlands International publication: Global Waterbird Population Estimates Second Edition (Wetlands International Publication 44, 1997)

The aims and objectives of the conference are:

- To review the historical developments of migratory waterbird conservation at all continents. Some international legislation goes back as far as the beginning of last century or earlier and also in ancient times migratory waterbirds have played a role in the life of indigenous peoples and society.
- To present and review the present situation on all initiatives regarding waterbird flyway conservation, both species groups and single species activities. This includes the larger international treaties Bonn Convention and AEWA, flyway strategies (NAWMP, APMWCS and others), site related networks (WHSRN) etc.
- To present an overview of current research on migratory waterbirds: ecology (migration related), migration routes, population dynamics, modern research techniques regarding migration, (colour banding, radio- and satellite tagging, geo-locators); interactions of migratory waterbirds with biodiversity in general.
- To provide an overview of the present conservation status of migratory waterfowl with special attention to within continent migrating species and to species with a nomadic character. The latter deserve special attention and provides a gap in knowledge and conservation effort.
- This status overview will be combined with a review of the various existing monitoring programmes for waterfowl their value and implementation and to formulate improvements.
- To provide an updated overview of the protection status of the major waterbird sites and discuss the process to identify conservation gaps in all flyways and formulate concrete steps for improvements.
- To discuss and evaluate the values of migratory waterbirds (economic, ecological, cultural , traditional etc.).
- To present an update on the harvest and sustainable use of waterbirds (subsistence harvest, "bush meat harvest" and recreational harvest).

To support these objectives it e.g. would be interesting to present on a national or regional basis, where appropriate, reports with the results of waterbird ringing programmes to provide a global overview of basic information on migratory behaviour of waterbirds. The conference could also provide a platform for discussions and decisions on a globally accepted network of defined flyways. The conference should also identify, at all levels and objectives, the need for research, identifying gaps in activities needed etc.

Dates and preliminary programme outline

The conference will be held very early in 2004. It will include a weekend for logistic reasons and could run from Saturday (arrival) until Wednesday (departure); however final dates to be determined in close consultations with other scheduled similar events.

The programme will have various elements:

- Opening session with formal opening by a high level representative of the Netherlands Government and overview presentations by with 2 key note speakers: one on waterbird flyway global policy and one on research developments.
- Plenary sessions in the morning by invited speakers to present the flyway activities for different parts of the world
- Parallel sessions and workshops in the afternoon
- Poster sessions will be an essential part of the conference
- Round table presentations during part of the evening (as requested)
- Presentation of flyway related films and videos in the evening.

Venue

The meeting will be held at the International Conference Centre in Wageningen (WICC), The Netherlands. Wageningen is a little more than one hour by public transport from Schiphol (Amsterdam Airport).

Fieldtrips

Field trips, weather permitting, can be organised to the major wintering sites of the millions of waders, geese, ducks and swans wintering in the Netherlands.

Languages

The working language throughout the conference will be English; no simultaneous translation into other languages can be provided unless the necessary full funding can be obtained.

Participants

The conference is meant for all who are active at a Governmental, Intergovernmental or Non governmental level, in the field of waterbird conservation, research, management and policies/funding, provided their work is of an applied nature and preferably related to global waterbirds flyways. The conference is not in the first instance meant for the presentation of pure fundamental research in which waterbirds or migration in general plays a role; a Scientific Committee will guide and review the call for papers and posters.

For logistic reasons, the number of participants is restricted to 250 people

Outputs

Conference programme and abstract book

All participants will receive the conference programme and abstracts of all presentations (plenary, workshops and posters)

Conference Proceedings

This will be the main output of the conference. The Proceedings should really be a comprehensive overview of the state of the art of waterbirds flyway conservation, management, policies and research on a global level. All papers and posters presented will be published in full, with comprehensive summaries in French, Spanish and Russian. An Editorial Committee will be guiding the process towards the publication which preferably should be in a special edition of a regular scientific journal

Conference declaration.

A conference declaration will be developed for endorsement by the conference. The declaration will have the format of a brochure and will address the definition of global waterbird flyways, summarises the main gaps and actions to be taken for flyway conservation (see also the International Wader Study Group Odessa Declaration 1992) and as such could act as a policy document to brought to the attention of international conventions, national governments, etc.

Organisation and logistics

The conference will be organised by Wetlands International in Wageningen, The Netherlands, on behalf of the Netherlands Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries.

Wetlands International will, in close consultation with the Host Government establish the necessary organisational infrastructure:

- Organising Committee, responsible for logistics and overall co-ordination of the conference; this will be mainly staff from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, Wetlands International HQ in Wageningen and contributing organisations.
- Scientific Committee to review all offered papers, posters, round table discussions, contributions etc. To also determine the contents of the plenary sessions, workshops and posters sessions.
- Editorial Committee to provide the necessary workforce and guidance for the production of the comprehensive Conference Proceedings.

A first formal Announcement will early 2002 be circulated.

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