



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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SECOND MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR
THE AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)
Biebrza National Park, Poland, 13-15 May 2010
Agenda Item 8.2

FUTURE MOU COORDINATION

(Note prepared by the CMS Secretariat and BirdLife International)

1. The CMS Secretariat acts as the Secretariat to the great majority of the 18 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) developed under CMS auspices. With the exception of three MoUs (Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, Dugongs, African Eurasian Birds of Prey), for which secretariat functions are undertaken by out-posted CMS offices in Bangkok and Abu Dhabi, secretariat services to MoUs are provided by the CMS Secretariat headquarters in Bonn, at no cost to the MoU signatories. The CMS Secretariat acts as Secretariat for the Aquatic Warbler MoU pursuant to MoU paragraph 14.
2. As the number of MoUs has grown, the CMS Secretariat has increasingly sought to partner with collaborating organisations to support it in organising Range State meetings and provide technically-oriented documentation and advice. In contrast to today, in previous times this had been typically funded from the appropriate dedicated meeting budget line under past CMS regular budgets.
3. Furthermore, in order to better ensure that the MoUs and their accompanying action plans are effectively implemented, the CMS Secretariat has been developing the theory and practice of outsourced “MoU coordinators” with many of the same collaborating partner organisations. This is in line with CMS Conference of the Parties Resolutions 7.7, 8.5 and 9.2, which encourage the Secretariat to continue exploring partnerships with interested organisations specialised in the conservation and management of migratory species for the provision of coordination services for selected MoUs. Coordinators, at least in part, are foreseen to catalyze project development and funding under an MoU’s action plan, support the preparation of regular meetings of the Range States, and undertake range-wide communication efforts to raise awareness and share information.
4. At its own initiative, the RSPB, the national partner of BirdLife International in the UK, raised funds for and established a position to support the MoU’s implementation. The undertaking was closely coordinated with and supported by the CMS Secretariat as a possible vehicle to support the MoU’s coordination. The new staff member with the job title of “BirdLife/CMS International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Officer” (AWCO) started work in April 2004, funded for three years by the German Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection. For



reasons of cost-effectiveness and in order to ensure the best possible synergy with the locally available knowledge on Aquatic Warbler conservation, the staff member was placed at APB-BirdLife Belarus in Minsk, i.e. in the country holding the largest share of the world's breeding population of the species.

5. Following the recommendations of the First Meeting of Signatories to this MoU in Crieven, Germany in June 2006, the CMS Secretariat signed a Letter of Agreement with RSPB in December 2006, agreeing to finance this position for a further two years at equal shares. A one year gap in the staffing of this position meant that the current funding arrangement lasted until March 2010. At present, the staff member is still employed courtesy of RSPB's agreement to continue funding 50% of the costs of this position. The other 50% is currently not covered.

6. The day-to-day management of the AWCO is being provided by APB-BirdLife Belarus and a dedicated staff member within the RSPB European Programmes and International Biodiversity Policy Department. The AWCO's overall work programme is to be agreed and reviewed annually by a steering group consisting of one representative each from RSPB, APB, the CMS Secretariat and the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team.

7. The AWCO operates in a purely technical capacity. The CMS Secretariat maintains official contact with the Range States and the relevant CMS institutions. The AWCO is tasked to work in a balanced way across the Aquatic Warbler's migratory range to the extent possible and within the confines of available financial resources. BirdLife and CMS agree to undertake joint fundraising activities for selected projects and activities.

8. The AWCO is undertaking a wide range of activities in support of the MoU's implementation. Among other things, he has (a) supported conservation work within a number of Range States (b) assisted Range States in securing funds for conservation activities (c) facilitated communication across the species range, including maintaining the web site for the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (AWCT, www.aquaticwarbler.net) and servicing the GIS site data base for the species (d) provided technical advice to the CMS Secretariat in preparations to the Second Meeting of Signatories, including the development of a new draft Range State reporting template, drafting of a Priority Projects list, and production of the Second issue of the Aquatic Warbler Flyway Newsletter and (e) provided other supporting documentation to the MoU meeting. The AWCO will assist in producing the meeting report. More information about the AWCO's work is included in the MoU implementation overview report.

9. In the appreciation of the CMS Secretariat and BirdLife International, the current solution of employing a dedicated person working at APB-BirdLife Belarus in support of the MoU implementation has proven to be cost-effective, considering the very modest costs of 20,000 USD/year covering salary costs and a small operational and travel budget.

10. RSPB-BirdLife UK has offered to continue funding 50% of the costs of the position for at least another 2 years, i.e. 10,000 USD/year. If the Signatory States support the continued employment of a dedicated staff member, then the remaining 50% (10,000 USD/year) should be contributed by CMS or any of the Signatory States. In this regard, considering other existing commitments and the CMS budgetary cycle, the CMS Secretariat is confident of being able to secure resources for the first year. The possibility of providing resources for the second year will depend on the budgetary settlement to be approved by the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to take place in 2011. Pledges from the Signatory States are encouraged to reduce or eliminate such uncertainties.

11. In a longer term perspective, the CMS Secretariat encourages further reflections towards the identification of mechanisms aimed at further reducing or eliminating the dependency of secretariat and coordination functions from the CMS core budget.

Actions requested:

The Signatories are invited to:

- (a) Extend their gratitude to BirdLife International and its national partners for taking the initiative and helping to support the MoU's implementation by co-funding the International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Officer position.
- (b) Consider the MoU coordination issue generally and determine whether the continuation of the BirdLife/CMS International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Officer employment is a desirable option that the Secretariat should pursue.
- (c) Consider the financial aspects of the coordination issue and provide any guidance on possible options for financing, including appealing for additional voluntary in-kind and financial contributions.