

Strasbourg, 27 May 1999
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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Experts on Conservation of Birds

2nd meeting
Strasbourg, 18-19 May 1999

REPORT OF THE MEETING

*Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the Directorate of Environment
and Local Authorities*

The Standing Committee is invited to:

1. take note of this report;
2. take note of the information provided by the Parties concerning the implementation of the Recommendations No. 48, 60, 61, 62 and of the follow up of the action plans for the globally threatened birds;
3. take note of the report of Dr Baz Hughes on “The Status of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palearctic and an action plan for eradication, 1999-2002”;
4. take note of the four new action plans for globally threatened birds in Europe, prepared by BirdLife International and endorsed by the Group of Experts;
5. examine and, if appropriate, adopt the draft Recommendation on the implementation of new action plans for globally threatened birds in Europe (Appendix 6);
6. take note of the recommendation on initiatives to be taken by Contracting Parties for the conservation of biodiversity, addressed by the Group of Experts to the Standing Committee (Appendix 8);
7. consider, while deciding on the programme of activities for year 2000, to finance the extension of action plans on four species to the whole of their European and North-African range. The species are:
 - *Botaurus stellaris*
 - *Gypaetus barbatus*
 - *Hieraaetus fasciatus*
 - *Tetrax tetrax*

(present plans only cover EU Member States)

1. Opening of the meeting

The Secretariat opened the meeting and informed the Group of changes that had taken place since the last meeting. Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano was Head *ad interim* of the Environment Conservation and Management and Regional Planning Division. Mr Gianluca Silvestrini was now in charge of the Bern Convention Secretariat. Ms Sandra Jen assisted him, in particular for the legal aspects, and Ms Katia Skripnichenko for the Emerald Network.

2. Election of the Chairman

Mr Olivier Robinet, representative of France, was elected Chairman of the Group following the proposals of the delegates of Czech Republic, Spain and Greece.

A list of participants is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted, with some amendments, as set out in Appendix 2.

4. Implementation of Recommendations No. 48, 60, 61, 62 and follow-up of the Bird Action Plans

The governments of Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Moldova, Portugal, Senegal, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine presented reports on the implementation of Recommendations Nos. 48, 60, 61, 62 and in general on their actions in favour of the preservation of threatened birds. All national reports sent to the Secretariat are included in Appendix 3 of this report.

Mr Szabolcs Nagy, representative of BirdLife International, expressed his satisfaction for the development to fulfil the recommendations. Appendix 4 shows the actions implemented by the BirdLife partnership on species for which an action plan has been published.

The Secretariat pointed out the importance of the reports to monitor the implementation of recommendations at national level. The governmental reports are presented in the meeting report in order to inform all countries on what each country is doing in practice for the conservation of threatened species and to encourage the States that do not submit their reports to transmit them to the Secretariat. The experts attending this meeting have a fundamental role in fostering their governments to implement the Bern Convention's provisions and the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

The representatives of Greece, Czech Republic, The Netherlands and Poland apologised for not having sent the national report and they promised to forward it to the Secretariat in the short-term. The Greek representative stated that legal and management measures for bird conservation would be finalised for the end of the current year. Information centres have been set up in Ramsar sites to give technical advises on conservation measures and to manage the funds provided by the European Union.

The Polish delegate, representing also the Polish Society for Bird Protection in Poland, informed the participants that, for the moment, they have national action plans oriented to the environmental protection and management but not for birds recovery in particular.

Dr Baz Hughes, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (United Kingdom), presented the "The Status of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palearctic and an action plan for eradication, 1999-2002", prepared on behalf of the Council of Europe. The results of this study will also be presented to the "Workshop on control and eradication of non-native terrestrial vertebrates", which will be organised in Malta on 3-5 June 1999 by the Bern Convention in co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment of Malta.

The expert stressed the importance to develop a strategy for the control and the eradication of this species, to set up a monitoring programme and to awaken public opinion to this problem.

The delegate of Spain promised to send to Dr Hughes the February report on the situation of the Ruddy Duck in Spain.

The Chairman asked information on the Protocol that the British government will use to eradicate or control the species in the country. Dr Hughes explained that, for the moment, they are assessing the feasibility for the total eradication of Ruddy Duck in Scotland, Wales and Great Britain.

5. Presentation of new Action Plans

Mr Szabolcs Nagy, representative of BirdLife International, introduced the eight new action plans developed by his organisation and co-financed by the European Commission (Appendix 5). They concern the following species:

Globally threatened species:

Aythya nyroca (Ferruginous Duck)
Polysticta stelleri (Steller's Eider)
Aquila clanga (Greater Spotted Eagle)

Priority species for conservation in EU:

Botaurus stellaris (Bittern)
Aquila pomarina (Lesser Spotted Eagle)
Gypaetus barbatus (Lammergeier)
Hieraaetus fasciatus (Bonelli's Eagle)
Tetrax tetrax (Little Bustard)

The compiled action plans were submitted by the European Commission to the ORNIS Commission (representatives from the 15 EU Member States). That Committee approved the plans with some amendments proposed by Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

The Secretariat informed the Group that only four action plans, which include information and recommendations also for countries that are not EU Member States, could be presented to the Standing Committee for endorsement:

Aythya nyroca (Ferruginous Duck)
Polysticta stelleri (Steller's Eider)
Aquila clanga (Greater Spotted Eagle)
Aquila pomarina (Lesser Spotted Eagle)

Since the other four action plans do not make any consideration related to Council of Europe's Member States other than European Union Member States, they cannot be approved in their present form.

The Chairman suggested seeking an agreement with BirdLife in order to complete the action plans for the conservation of species in EU with information related also to non-EU countries.

The Secretariat pointed out that the financial resources of the Bern Convention are limited but a suitable solution will be sought with BirdLife, to integrate information for other Contracting Parties to the Convention.

Mr Carlos Romão, representative of the European Commission, DG-XI, supported the new action plans as useful instruments to identify priorities in conservation activities and to be used as working documents by the governments. The action plans are also used at Community level to identify priorities and co-ordinate co-financing through the LIFE financial instrument.

The Secretariat presented the draft Recommendation on the implementation of new action plans for globally threatened birds in Europe (Appendix 6), which recommends that Contracting Parties and observer states to the Convention, carry out national action plans for these new species. The Group of Experts endorsed the recommendation with the four new action plans that have a pan-European consideration for bird conservation.

6. Presentation of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and its activities

Mr Bert Lenten, Executive Secretary of the AEWA, informed the participants of the ongoing and future activities in the framework of the AEWA. His presentation is illustrated in Appendix 7.

Concerning the possible initiative to strengthen the co-operation between the Bern Convention and the AEWA, Mr Lenten suggested to continue the development of single species action plans at flyway level. In the future AEWA would like to take over action plans for water birds species.

The representative of the European Commission informed the Group that the EU Member States at the ORNIS Committee have indicated their intention to ratify the Agreement. For the time being, the European Commission has not yet taken a decision on this matter.

The delegate of DHKD suggested the Secretariat to make an appeal to the Standing Committee inviting the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention to sign the Agreement. The Secretariat will present this appeal in the form of a written recommendation addressed by the Group of Experts to the Standing Committee (Appendix 8).

7. 20th anniversary of the European Union's Bird Directive: main results and constraints of its implementation

Mr Carlos Romão, representative of the European Commission, DG-XI, explained that the Birds Directive could be considered as the twin sister of the Bern Convention since they are both born in 1979. The Birds Directive represents the first specific legislation for nature conservation of the European Community and establishes a general level of protection for all bird species naturally occurring in the EU.

The Directive has two main sets of articles and provisions:

- site protection and management;
- species protection.

As far as the site protection is concerned, Member States should designate the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the species listed in the Annex I of the Directive (rare or threatened species) and for migratory species.

In the framework of the 20th Anniversary, the European Commission asked the European Topic Centre for Nature Conservation of the European Environment Agency to evaluate the extent to which Annex I bird species (that are priority for LIFE Nature funding) are covered by the existing SPAs network. This analysis will be made from the data transmitted by EU Member States in the form of digitised information. The European Commission is aware that the classification of SPAs and the information provided on SPAs still contains many gaps.

The Birds Directive establishes basic rules concerning hunting. It lists the bird species that may be subject to hunting and provides a generic frame for the establishment of hunting seasons by Member

States, prohibiting hunting during the most critical phases for birds (e.g. period of reproduction and pre-nuptial migration).

Funds for bird conservation projects have been provided through financial instruments such as ACE, ACNAT and LIFE, since the mid-eighties.

The European Commission is organising a "LIFE-week" happening in October to bring together people that have been working in LIFE projects across the Community. One of the workshops will be dedicated to evaluate the contribution of LIFE to the conservation of birds.

8. Designation of Important Birds Areas for Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas and for Emerald Network sites, as contribution to the implementation of the Species Action Plans

The Secretariat informed the Group of the activities related to the Emerald Network, constituting Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs) in the territory of the Contracting Parties and observer States to the Bern Convention. Five pilot projects for the setting up of the Emerald Network will be launched this year in Bulgaria, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey. The Emerald Network is one of the major components of the Bern Convention's programme of activities for future years, and it is vital that all the Groups of Experts thought about what contributions they could make towards setting up this Network and conserving the habitats of relevant species.

Mr Szabolcs Nagy, delegate of BirdLife International, presented the designation of Important Birds Areas (IBAs) for Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas and for Emerald Network sites, and emphasised that IBAs are practical tools contributing to the implementation of the action plans and to the identification of ASCIs. His presentation is reported in Appendix 9.

The Secretariat and the representative of the European Commission underlined that IBAs provide the governments with important technical and scientific data from which information could be taken into consideration to design the areas for Natura 2000 and the Emerald Network. However, they cannot be considered as shadow lists for these Networks. In fact, the criteria for site identification are not identical and the Bern Convention, the Habitat and the Birds Directives do not consider only isolated sites but they try to set up a real Network.

The Group of Experts decided to address a recommendation to the Standing Committee inviting the Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention to consider the IBAs and the work carried out by BirdLife International, in the setting up of the Emerald Network and Natura 2000 (Appendix 8).

9. BirdLife's vision for the establishment of a European Bird Monitoring System as a basis for biodiversity indicators of sustainability

Dr Richard Gregory, Head of Monitoring and Survey Section at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, presented the European Bird Monitoring System as a basis for biodiversity indicators of sustainability (Appendix 10).

The delegate of The Netherlands stressed the importance to protect not only the threatened birds but also the common and widespread species, which they can also become endangered because of the less interest in monitoring and protecting these species at national and international level. He supported the project for the European Bird Monitoring System and suggested addressing a recommendation to the Standing Committee drawing its attention to the importance of setting up the bird-monitoring project at pan-European level (Appendix 8).

The Group sustained the Dutch proposal.

10. Discussion of the Group's future activities and its relations with other initiatives

The Secretariat pointed out the importance to follow up the implementation of the previous and the new Bird Action Plans, as well as the adopted recommendations. It is not only important to prepare and adopt new action plans but also to check if States concretely implement them. Monitoring the threatened species, for which an action plan has been prepared, constitute a way to prioritise the activities of the Group for bird conservation. It is in fact unrealistic, with the limited financial resources of the Bern Convention, to follow up the conservation of all bird species included in the Appendix to the Convention. Nevertheless, the Group should remain attentive to other specific bird conservation problems, should the need arise.

The Secretariat will find an agreement with BirdLife International to complete the four action plans, which consider the species only in EU Member States, including information on conservation status and recommendations for conservation actions also for some Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention. The action plans that should be reviewed are the following:

Botaurus stellaris (Bittern), *Gypaetus barbatus* (Lammergeier), *Hieraaetus fasciatus* (Bonelli's Eagle) and *Tetrax tetrax* (Little Bustard).

As far as the action plans adopted by the Group are concerned, their final versions - including the amendments proposed by the ORNIS Committee - will be presented to the Standing Committee for endorsement in December 1999, as well as the new recommendation.

11. Other business

No other business was raised.

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2**Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat
2. Election of the Chairman
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Implementation of Recommendations Nos. 48, 60, 61, 62 and follow-up of the Bird Action Plans
 - Reports from the governments
 - Action by non-governmental organisations
 - Discussion
 - Report on Plan to control the spread/eradication ruddy duck from Europe
(*Dr Baz Hughes, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, United Kingdom*)
5. Presentation of new Action Plans
(*Mr Szabolcs Nagy, BirdLife International*)
 - Possible recommendation to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention
6. Presentation of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) and its activities
(*Mr Bert Lenten, Executive Secretary*)
 - Possible initiative to strengthen the co-operation between the Bern Convention and the AEWA
 - Discussion
7. 20th anniversary of the European Union's Bird Directive: main results and constraints of its implementation
(*Mr Carlos Romão, European Commission, DG XI*)
8. Designation of Important Birds Areas for Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas and for Emerald Network Sites, as contribution to the implementation of the Species Action Plans
(*Mr Szabolcs Nagy, BirdLife International*)
9. BirdLife's vision for the establishment of a European Bird Monitoring System as a basis for biodiversity indicators of sustainability
(*Dr Richard D. Gregory, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*)
10. Discussion of the Group's future activities and its relations with other initiatives
11. Other business

APPENDIX 3

Implementation of Recommendations Nos. 48, 60, 61 and 62

National Reports

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Only the corncrake *Crex crex* and the great bustard *Otis tarda* are breeding in Austria.

Corncrake

In the year 1998 for Austria 120-400 singing males are estimated.

In the „Länder“ Vienna, Lower Austria and Vorarlberg there are programmes by BirdLife Österreich and the provincial governments. 60% of the national Corncrake population is concentrated in Lower Austria. In Styria all the known regions were included in the Natura 2000 network. In Salzburg the corncrake is no regularly breeding bird. There are no special programmes for corncrakes, but for meadowbirds. In Upper Austria on at least 15 sites singing males were observed.

In most of the Länder payments were made to farmers for Corncrake-friendly mowing.

Great Bustard

The great Bustard occurs only in the Länder Burgenland and Lower Austria. There are only 4 (5) populations still remaining in the pannonic region.

	Parndorfer Platte		Heide- boden		Marchfeld		Weinviertel	
	Sum	male/ female	sum	male/ female	sum	male/ female	sum	male/ female
No. of birds breeding saison 1997	4	0/4	84-86	36/48-50	10	2/8	23	11/12
No. of birds breeding saison 1996	6	0/6	59	24/35	10	3/7	22	7/15
fledged young one's 1997	1	0/1	19-20	5/14-15	1	0/1	4	2/2
1996	3	1/2	26-27	13/13-14	1	1/0	10	3/7
No. of birds at autumn 1997	5	0/5	ca. 100	ca. 40/60	11	2/9	26	12/14
1996	9	1/8	84-86	36/48-50	11	4/7	33	11/22

Conservation measures must focus on active habitat management, especially the protection and management of breeding areas (therefore more special qualified personnel is needed) and on the maintenance of large areas of non-intensive farming systems. The population has been managed since the 1970's but it is necessary to spend more money on this projects.

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

National Report on the activities concerning the implementation of Recommendations No 48, 60, 61, 62 of the Council of Europe and the Birds Action Plans follow-up in Republic of Bulgaria

by Nikolai Venelinov Petkov, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds/BirdLife Bulgaria

The present report covers the activities and the actions taken by the Republic of Bulgaria from 1997 up to May 1999 for the implementation of the Recommendation No 48, 60, 61, 62 and the Birds Action Plans with stress on the topics related to the conservation of the Globally Threatened Species in Bulgaria. The report covers the activities and the results of the Governmental as well as the Non Governmental Organizations.

1. LEGISLATION

- *Act on the Protected Territories*

One of the major results of the activities of the Bulgarian Government was this new Act that was voted by the Parliament in 1998. The Act arranges the categories, the purpose, the regime of use and protection, declaration and management of the different types of protected areas. It declares that the State develops and provides the functioning and conservation of a system of protected territories as a part of the regional and global networks of such areas in accordance with the international treaties to which Bulgaria is a party. The new Act fills in some deficiencies of the existing legislation and is the first big legislative document concerning the Nature Protection voted by the Parliament in the last years. This Act influences the conservation of the rare bird species through protection and management of their habitats and the key areas for them;

- The updated *List of the indemnities for damages done to protected fauna species* - including their trapping, shooting, injuring, destruction of nests and juveniles (edited as a Ministerial Decree approved by the Council of Ministers). The sums for the indemnities have been corrected and now they are at a level which is high enough as a sanction for the standards in Bulgaria. Jail and legal prosecution is foreseen in the document for damages done to the most rare species. The fines for Globally Threatened Species have been set from about 250 DM to 1 - 2 000 DM. This document has direct connection to the protection of the Globally Threatened Species. It helps for improving the law reinforcement. In its preparation the Ministry of Environment was actively supported and consulted by the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA experts;

- *Act on Hunting and Game Protection*

Another significant document that has been prepared by the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Agrarian Reform. The Government has elaborated and submitted in the Parliament a draft of the Act. It has passed a public discussion with the participation of the organizations and institutions interested in it, including participants from NGOs - The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds and Green Balkans-Sofia. The public discussion was chaired by the Minister of Agriculture. The Act Draft submitted by the Government fulfills entirely the regulations and requirements of the European Union Legislation and has the full support of the Bulgarian Conservation NGOs. The NGO representatives are even invited to attend the session of the Parliamentary Commission which will edit the document for voting.

2. OTHER STRATEGIC AND IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- *National Action Plan for the Biodiversity*

This document has been prepared in its draft version by a team of experts and is due to be offered for public discussion. It sets up specific time limits for the fulfillment of the measures, priorities and funds for the protection of the species and their habitats. This document will become a leading tool for the Nature Conservation in Bulgaria. The document foresees elaboration and fulfillment of National Action Plans for the Globally Threatened Species occurring in Bulgaria. It is planned the Biodiversity Action Plan to be accepted by the Government by September 1999;

- *National Program for Biological Monitoring*

This document has been prepared with a PHARE Program support by several scientific institutions and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, which elaborated and developed those parts of the Program that concern the bird fauna monitoring. The bird monitoring parameters cover regular censuses of all of the Globally Threatened species in Bulgaria either as breeding species or as wintering ones;

- *National Action Plans for the Globally Threatened Species in Bulgaria*

This initiative was undertaken by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds. The National Action Plans are prepared in accordance with and further the objectives of the European Action Plans, but they are much more specific and detailed for the measures and the actual steps taken within the country. These Action Plans are obligatory requirement according to the National Action Plan for the Biodiversity. They will become official state obligatory documents following their approval by the Ministry of Environment and Waters. The drafts of the first three Plans - for the Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), the Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) and the Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) have been discussed on a national workshop co-organised in April 1999 by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds and the Ministry of Environment and Waters. In the workshop participated specialists and experts from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Environment and Waters and their relevant regional inspectorates, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Agrarian Reform, Conservation NGOs etc.

The rest of the National Action Plans Prepared by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds will be discussed on a Second National Workshop planned for the late 1999. They cover the Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*), Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), Corncrake (*Crex crex*);

- *Management Plans for key protected areas*

During the last two years have been elaborated the first ever management plans for some key areas of enormous importance for the conservation of a number of Globally Threatened Species, especially the Red-breasted Goose, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Dalmatian Pelican, White-headed Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Pygmy Cormorant. These are the Ramsar sites Shabla lake, Durankulak lake, which support the wintering of as much as up 80% of the world population of the Red-breasted Goose and Atanassovo lake. The other areas are the Poda protected area, Kamchia and Ropotamo rivermouth complexes. The management plans have been elaborated as part of the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program conducted on a state level with the active partnership and participation of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds.

Priority actions according to these Management plans have been undertaken for virtually all of the mentioned protected areas. Many of them have been taken by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, as well as by the Ministry of Environment.

Some similar actions are carried out by “Le Balkan” Foundation with the support of the French Government in the area of the Black Sea Dobrudga region.

Under preparation and ready for preliminary public discussion is the management plan for Srebarna lake - the only breeding location of the Dalmatian Pelican in Bulgaria. It is elaborated by the Ministry of Environment and Waters through the Central Laboratory for General Ecology with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;

- *Declaration on the wetlands along the Bulgarian sector of the Danube river*

This declaration has been prepared with the active cooperation of the WWF International and signed by the Ministry of Environment and Waters, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Agrarian Reform and the Ministry of Regional Development. It acknowledges the importance of the wetlands along Danube river and sets a five years term for active research and expanding of the net of protected territories in the Danube region and provide the elaboration and fulfillment of management plans for these territories. For the next three years it foresees to be elaborated and fulfilled a program for support and restoration of wetlands along Danube. The Declaration calls for cooperation for the fulfillment of its purposes and is opened for joining by local authorities and NGOs;

- *International Agreement for “Green Corridor Lower Danube”* - an initiative of the governments of Roumania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukrain. The initiative is aimed to increasing the protected areas along the Danube riverside, restore former wetlands in this area and start their management. The agreement is still in its preliminary stage.

3. FIELD CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

The field activities concerning the conservation of the Globally Threatened Species of Birds and their habitats are mainly carried out by the Conservation NGOs. The role of the governmental institutions concern mainly the law enforcement by the local structures of the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Forestry Department via their regional inspectorates and directories of reserves and national parks. Often their activities are in cooperation with NGOs and following their signals for law breaking activities. Especially active in the field activities is the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds/BirdLife Bulgaria - the national bird conservation organization, the Green Balkans, Wilderness Fund, Le Balkan-Bulgaria and others;

- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA/BirdLife Bulgaria with its volunteers has identified a network of Important Bird Areas which are under regular monitoring. Many of these support either important breeding populations of Globally Threatened Species or are of great importance for them during migration and wintering;
- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA carries out a regular monitoring of the wintering populations of all Globally Threatened Species in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Waters and other Conservation NGOs;
- Monitoring of the numbers and ecology of the Red Breasted Goose in the region of Dobrudga (Shabla and Durankulak lakes) is carried out by field experts and volunteers of the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA throughout the winter of each year through a project of the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program. The counts are carried out in coordination with the Romanian Ornithological Society and ProDelta in Romania;

- Le Balkan Foundation is working on a project for radio tracking of the migration routes of the Red-breasted Goose from its wintering grounds in Bulgaria back to the breeding sites. In its work the Foundation is supported by specialists from the Keis Wesel Biological Center in Germany;
- A special project to study the impact on cereal crops of the wintering geese in the areas of Shabla and Durankulak lakes is carried out by the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA. This project aims to reduce the conflicts of the local farmers with the wintering geese;
- An agreement has been signed by the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA with local farmers from Dobrudga in order to support and stimulate crop growing that benefits and ensures the feeding supplies of the Red Breasts and Whitefronts in the area during the winter;
- Two field expeditions have been carried out by a team of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds and the Norwegian Ornithological Society to identify the key wintering areas and distribution of the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Bulgaria;
- Hunting control for the Red Breasted Goose and the Lesser White-fronted Goose is carried out each hunting season by BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA volunteers;
- Le Balkan foundation has carried out field studies in search of nesting Great Bustards in Bulgarian Dobrudga in 1998. A lot of interviews with local people have been conducted and big amount of information on the area has been collected;
- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA has implemented two National Census Projects of the Corncrake with the support of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. They helped to clarify the status and numbers and the ecology of this Globally Threatened Species and identify measures for its conservation in Bulgaria;
- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA carried out a National Census of the Ferruginous Duck from 1995-1997 to identify the numbers of the species in the country and its key breeding sites and clarify the threats for the species survival in Bulgaria;
- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA conducted a mapping of the breeding Ferruginous Duck in fishponds in 1997 as part of an European action to collect data on the fishponds used by the species and also on the Duck's ecology;
- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA implemented a project in 1998 for elaboration of census and monitoring technique of the breeding Ferruginous Ducks in Bulgaria;
- The Ministry of Environment and Waters funded a project for identification and application of priority measures for the conservation of the Imperial Eagle. The Project was implemented by a coalition of conservation NGOs coordinated by the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA;
- The wintering and breeding population of the Pygmy Cormorant in Bulgaria has been regularly and strictly monitored by the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA and Green Balkans. Permanent activities have been going on for reducing the poaching, shooting and disturbance of the species by both of these NGOs;
- BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA organised a National Round Table for discussions of the Conservation of the Pygmy Cormorant with respect to the damages that fishponds do suffer from the species. Specialist from the Ministry of Agriculture and fish farms took part in the workshop;

- Within the framework of the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Program BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA has set up a Nature Conservation Center in the Eastern Rhodope mountain. One of the main activities of the Center are directed to the artificial feeding, monitoring and protection of the Cinereous Vulture in Bulgaria. Similar activities are developed by the Green Balkans in the region. Active cooperation and exchange of information is going on with specialist working on the same problems on the other side of the border in Greece;
- Special project has started as part of the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Program for stimulation of the livestock growing in the Eastern Rhodope mountain as a source for improving the food resources for the Cinereous Vulture in the region. A farm with native breeds of sheep has been launched and native shepherd dog are being given free to the shepherds in the region in order to prevent the laying of poisons for the wolves in the region and thus exposing to the risk of poisoning the vultures;
- The artificial nest platform for Dalmatian Pelicans in Srebarna Biosphere Reserve has been enlarged to stimulate the nesting of the birds on it.

4. PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- The Second meeting of the Goose Specialists Working Group of Wetlands International took place in February 1998 in Bulgaria. It was co-organised on behalf of Wetland International by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Bulgaria-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program. Most of the discussions were focused on the work on the Globally Threatened Species and hunting problems;
- A National Inventory of the Important Bird Areas in Bulgaria was published in 1997 by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds and the Ministry of Environment and Waters. It is an important policy and conservation tool and the book was launched and officially presented in various regions in the country in vicinity to IBAs. In these presentation active participants were representatives of the local inspectorates of the Ministry of Environment and Waters, Municipalities and BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA local structures;
- Ministry of Environment and Waters has published in 1998 a book (checklist and bibliography) on the biodiversity of Srebarna Biosphere Reserve;
- A monograph on the biodiversity of Shabla lake has been published in 1998 by the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Institute of Zoology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
- As part of the educational and public awareness activities of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds have been published and distributed the following materials:
 1. Poster of the Corncrake showing the distribution and conservation needs of the species and sticker of the Corncrake directed to hunters, farmers etc. funded by BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds;
 2. A poster for conservation of the Pygmy Cormorant has been published by Green Balkans;
 3. Poster of the Cinereous Vulture, Imperial Eagle and other rare raptors in the Eastern Rhodopes as part of the activities on the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Program;

4. Poster and sticker of the Lesser White-fronted Goose showing extensive information about the species. This materials were funded by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and the Norwegian Ornithological Society and versions of it were published by BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA for other BirdLife Partners in Hungarian, Russian, English, Kazachi, Rumanian etc;
5. Sticker focused on the conservation of Red Breasted Goose in Bulgaria;
6. Poster-leaflet on the IBAs along the Danube River and the Globally Threatened Species occurring in them, funded by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe - Sofia;
7. Leaflet on the Pygmy Cormorant in Bulgaria - its distribution, conservation and problems;
8. Booklet on how to cope with the problems caused by herons and cormorants in fishponds without shooting and killing the birds. This booklet was part of the BSPB/BIRDLIFE BULGARIA activities for conservation of the Pygmy Cormorant in Bulgaria.

The activities reported here present the strong intent and will of the Bulgarian Conservation Community to continue and complete its obligations in conserving the Globally Threatened Species and their habitats in Bulgaria despite the difficult transition period. We all hope that all this will be result of the joined efforts of the Governmental and Non Governmental Organizations with the help and support of foreign and international organizations and institutions who want to give their contribution to the preservation of one of the Europe's richest Biodiversity.

FINLAND / FINLANDE

Conservation activities for the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) in Finland and international activities carried out by Finnish partners

1. PROJECT ORGANISATION

1.1. Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) project of WWF Finland 1983

In Finland, LWfG was protected by a statute as late as in 1969 - more than two decades after the population crash. A protection group for LWfG was formed by Finnish WWF in 1983. Since then, the Finnish LWfG working group has e.g. interviewed reindeer herders and hikers visiting the potential breeding areas, monitored the staging geese during migration, made extensive surveys in Lapland and carried out a lot of research work on the biology of LWfG. Information about the alarming situation of the LWfG has been distributed to authorities, organisations and journals concerning with ornithology, hunting and conservation in Europe and north-western Asia. In 1997-1999, the LWfG team of WWF Finland consisted of ca 30 members, with delegates of the Ministry of Environment, two regional Environmental Centres, BirdLife Finland, Forest and Park Service and Hunters' Central Organisation in addition to several volunteer activists. The group has an official status as an adviser of the Ministry of the Environment Finland concerning conservation of the LWfG. The main part of the activities of the Finnish LWfG project in 1984-1998 has been funded by the Finnish Ministry of Environment, WWF Finland and WWF Sweden / WWF Arctic programme, but the major part of the vast work carried out by the Finnish LWfG working group has been done by the expert volunteers without any salaries.

1.2. *Anser erythropus* Life/Nature project of Finland

In the years 1997-1999, the major part of the LWfG conservation activities in Finland is carried out by the Finnish LWfG Life-Nature project supported by European Union (EU). The aim of the project is to save the Lesser White-fronted Goose population that is close to extinction in the EU with the last few pairs breeding in Finland and Sweden. The key methods in the project are revealing the partly unknown breeding, migration time staging and wintering areas by satellite tracking, and improving the conservation in these areas.

The partners of the LWfG Life project Finland are: Northern Lapland District for Wilderness Management (Metsähallitus, Ylä-Lapin luonnonhoitoalue), North Ostrobothnia Regional Environment Centre (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan ympäristökeskus), Häme Regional Environment Centre (Hämeen ympäristökeskus), Lapland Regional Environment Centre (Lapin ympäristökeskus), West Finland Regional Environment Centre (Länsi-Suomen ympäristökeskus), Hunters' Central Organisation (Metsästäjien keskusjärjestö) and WWF Finland (WWF Suomen rahasto).

1.3. Wetlands International Lesser White-fronted Goose Task Force (Working Team)

International co-operation especially with Norwegian, Swedish and Russian colleagues is well established, and the Finnish LWfG working group has two delegates in the Wetlands International LWfG conservation team (since 1999 "Task Force").

2. OBJECTIVES (A), ACTIVITIES (B) AND RESULTS (C)

2.1.

- a.*** To gain accurate information of migration routes and wintering areas of the LWfG.
 - to tag LWf Geese with satellite transmitters and colour-rings in Siberia and Nordic countries
 - to reveal staging and wintering areas still unsufficiently known in the Western Palearctic

- b. Survey / satellite tagging effort on breeding areas (Finnish Lapland (1985-)1994-1998, Taimyr Peninsula 1997-98, Yamal peninsula 1996-98)

Autumn and spring monitoring in NW Kazakhstan (1996-1998)

- c. Migration route from Finland via NW Russia to NW Kazakhstan revealed. Migration route from Yamal to NW Kazakhstan and W Kazakhstan revealed. Migration route from Taimyr to N Kazakhstan and the NW part of the Caspian Sea revealed. A number of staging places and roosting lakes in Kazakhstan revealed.

2.2.

- a. To estimate the world population, population patterns and trend of the LWfG and establish a monitoring program that can be carried out with moderate costs.
- b. to follow-up numbers of migrating LWfG on the Bothnian Bay coast, Estonia, Kazakhstan and Varangerfjord (N Norway) and (more irregularly) to assess numbers of the LWfG at Kanin peninsula (NW Russia), Hungary, Greece and even China (eastern part population).
- c. Bothnian Bay coast monitored 1985-1998 (a decline of ca 50 percents), Estonia monitoring established in 1998, Kazakhstan monitored 1986-1998, Varangerfjord 1985-1988, Kanin peninsula visited in 1996 (ca 100 LWfG e.g. Finnish colour-ringed individuals found, a protected area established in 1998 by the Russians), Hungary visited in 1992, Greece visited in winter 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 (in co-operation with the Greek LWfG project and Finnish and Greek universities). Surveys in Chinese wintering areas supported 1997-1998, participated February 1999.

The world (winter) population (of all age classes) can now be quite accurately estimated as 22 000-30 000 individuals.

2.3.

- a. To improve public awareness of the endangered status of the LWfG specially among hunters
- b. *Awareness* campaign (newspaper articles, printing of brochures, posters and stickers, to distribute information articles etc.)
- c. A great number of publications (e.g. in 1998 27), brochures, press releases (e.g. in 1998 published in tens of newspapers) and information posters have been produced.

2.4.

- a. To intensify protection of the LWfG in all breeding, staging and wintering areas
- b. to make initiatives of intensified protection to e.g. Nordic countries Kazakhstan and China
- c. Finnish staging areas were included in the Natura 2000 network. A protected area has been established in Kanin peninsula, NW Russia (see 2.2 c). The work of NW Kazakhstan hunting inspection organisation has been supported. Negotiations with local authorities e.g. in Kazakhstan. The official protection of the LWfG will be confirmed in near future in Kazakhstan.

2.5.

- a. To collect biological data relevant for conservation biology of the LWfG
- b. (Other) study work is carried out in connection with population surveys. Subjects and material for graduate works is offered to university students.

- c. Studies have been carried out e.g. on:
- migration patterns (satellite telemetry)
 - genetic population structure of the world population of the LWfG using DNA-techniques (a dissertation work will be completed 1999-2000) and blood and feather material
 - habitat selection and diet in breeding and staging grounds (two graduate works completed)
 - -impact of environmental factors (phenology, abundance of predators and alternative prey) on gosling production
 - age structure of different sub-populations
 - behaviour
 - timing of the moult
 - identification of goslings of different ages (in captivity and in field)

2.6.

- a. To build a network of specialists and activists in all countries hosting breeding, staging or wintering Lesser White-fronted Geese.
- b. Implemented in Nordic and international level.
- c. Nordic co-operation established in 1988. Wetlands International LWfG Task Force established in 1995 has representatives from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Kazakhstan, Hungary, Japan, China and the Netherlands (Wetland Int. co-ordinator). Co-operation partners exist also e.g. in Greece, Estonia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

3. THE MATTERS WHERE URGENT ACTION IS REQUIRED

The following list consists of matters that may need an intervention or financial support by the Council of Europe and EU:

Establishing hunting-free zones and zones where all human activities are prohibited during the autumn staging time are needed on Bothnian Bay coast (SE corner of the isle of Hailuoto being the most important and problematic one) and Varangerfjord, Norway (especially the isle of Skjåholm), but the efforts have faced quite a serious resist. International pressure is needed to solve the problems. The contentions should be sent to the Finnish and Norwegian government.

The newly-established protected area in Kanin peninsula (NW Russia) needs to be surveyed from time to time to confirm that the protection really is in action. Contacts to the government of Arhangelsk oblast and the autonomous area of Nenets land (in the town of Narajanmar) could be useful acknowledging the great effectiveness of these organisation in establishing the protected area only one year after the reveal of the Kanin peninsula staging area of the LWfG.

The decision of Greece to protect all geese should be acknowledged, but more effort should be put to realize this, because according to very recent observations hunting (of also geese) is going on at Evros delta, which is the most important and in many years the only wintering quarter of the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Europe. According to new observations ca 25 percents of the geese in this area have lost pieces of their wing feathers and this is mostly due to shot-gun shooting.

One LWfG satellite-transmitter tagged in Siberia last summer was shot SW of the capital of Kazakhstan in November and its mate a little later in Dagestan, Russia, on the NW coast of the Caspian Sea, again indicating the extremely high hunting pressure on the LWfG along the Siberia - Caspian Sea flyway. The most important LWfG roosting lakes should be taken into account in international conservation projects (UNEP, WWF international etc.) concerning Kazakhstan and neighbouring areas. The international community should also pay attention to the resources of the hunting inspection organisation working quite effectively at least in NW Kazakhstan but suffering lack of money and fuel. NW Kazakhstan is also visited by European hunting tourists that rent (probably also goose roting) lakes and probably hunt also in reed zones and in water where hunting of local people is prohibited. The

privatisation of land and lakes has also brought more activities and more disturbance to some of the most important LWfG roosting lakes. One way to improve LWfG (and other) conservation could be to purchase the key areas and form protected areas.

The situation in Azerbaijan, that has been hosting an important part of the wintering LWfG population in Western Palearctic, is far more worse than in Kazakhstan. The nature reserve system seems to be paractically collapsed and goose shooting is going on even at Kizil-Agatch, the most important LWfG area. An international attention and contact could bring some progress.

China is in winter-time hosting roughly (at least) one half of the world population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, most of them concentrating to a compact area of Eastern Dongting Lake nature reserve in Hunan province. The major threat to the LWfG in this area is illegal poisoning that cannot at the moment be stopped or effectively limited by the staff of the nature reserve. International support is needed e.g. to supply the staff with better communication including cars or motorbikes and telephones or walkie-talkies. Also the status of the LWfG is unclear among the protected species. The LWfG should be included in list “A” of the most effectively protected species. At the moment it is missing even from the list “B”, which includes such species as the many times more numerous White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*). Some Chinese scientists interpret this so that LWfG was considered a sub-species of the White-fronted Goose, but it is also a common opinion that the White-front is protected but the Lesser White-front not! The final goal must be including of the LWfG to the highest rank of protected species (list A) that will mean protection also outside nature reserves.

FRANCE

GREECE / GRECE

Progress report on the implementation of the Recommendation Nos. 48 and 60 of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on the conservation of the European globally threatened birds

by Demetra SPALA, Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, Environmental Planning Division, Natural Environment Management Section

This progress report covers the period 1997-1999 and the relevant activities undertaken in Greece, with regard to those species occurring in Greece. Four, out of twenty three species, of the Rec. No 48 do not occur in Greece, namely:

<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	<i>Crex crex</i>
<i>Acrocephalus palludicola</i>	<i>Otis tarda</i>

I. GENERAL MEASURES

1. Hunting is prohibited with regard to all species, covered by the Rec. No 48.
2. Mid-winter counts, for all the water-fowl (migratory species) have been carried out since 1982, by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Hellenic Ornithological Society, the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature and the Greek Ringing Centre, in cooperation with Wetlands International.
3. For all Ramsar sites, legal conservation and management measures are at the final stage of elaboration.
4. Operation of Information Centres, of the Ministry of the Environment, is an ongoing activity, through Contractual Management Agreements signed by the Ministries of the Environment, Agriculture and the relevant Local Authorities, for promoting nature conservation awareness. In the same framework technical works have been constructed for nature conservation purposes.
5. The use of poisoned baits has been totally banned, in parallel to other actions undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Hunters Associations, NGO's, Scientists towards related wild life management issues (in the bird important areas), the alternatives for the prevention of damages against the animal raising activity and the apiculture, as well as, for legal aspects of compensation in cases of damage.

II. SPECIES ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

1. *Oxyura leucocephala* (White headed duck)

The key site for this species is the southeastern part of the Vistonis lake (SPA, candidate Natura 2000 and Ramsar site) and in 1997 2,300 individuals have been recorded. Some individuals are found in the near by area of Ismaris and Kerkini lakes, which are also designated as SPA, Candidate Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

It is unknown if the population is coming from Turkey or Russia. The Hellenic Ornithological Society with the financial support of the Dutch NGO «Yogelberchermg» has started, since October, 1998 field work and public awareness activities aiming at:

- the inventory (twice/week) of the species range
- the behavioural and feeding patterns of the species
- the assessment of the main threats
- the awareness of the local population and hunters on the species' habitat requirements
- the elaboration of conservation proposals

2. *Falco naumanii* (Lesser Kestrel)

This species has its main range area in Thessalia (Central Continental Greece) where the estimated population, by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, is between 2,500-3,000 pairs.

The designation of protected area, as suggested by the respective Birdlife Action Plan, seems not realistic taking into consideration that the main resting and feeding habitats of this species are respectively, houses in residential areas and the agricultural cultivated land. The review of the Important Bird Areas List, carried out by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, has brought to the attention of Competent National Authorities for consideration, 6 areas (not fully agricultural) in which the species occur.

3. *Aquila heliacea* (Imperial Eagle)

On the basis of the survey of the Hellenic Ornithological Society (September 1997) mostly immature individuals, coming from the northern countries, are visiting Greece and the wintering areas are the Evros, Axios and Kalamas deltas, as well as the Kerkini lake and Missolonghi lagoon. All these areas are SPA, Candidate Natura 2000 and Ramsar (with the exception of Kalamas delta) sites.

During migration, this species has been observed in Peloponese and in some Aegean Sea islands.

The main threats against this species are the biotope degradation due to the agriculture and forestry intensification, the reduction in low land forests and wetland areas. Illegal hunting and the use of poisoned baits (not permitted now), are listed as two other threats.

Main attention has been given by the Hellenic Ornithological Society in carrying out field work (1997) in the mountainous area «Tsamanta-Filiates-Pharmakovouni and Megali Rahi», a border area to Albania in the Epirus Region.

This area is ideal for raptors in general and for Imperial eagle. Two adult individuals have been once, observed on 18th April 1997. The reasons for this single observation could be attributed to:

- extended range area of the species northern, in Albania or southern to Kalamas delta (Greece); i.e an area out of the observation field.
- the birds' disturbance during breeding has resulted in no new attempt for breeding in this particular area
- detrimental effect of poisoned baits.

On the basis of the forementioned survey potential nesting areas have been estimated which are considered significant for wintering.

4. *Aegypius monachus* - Cinereous vulture

The population of cinereous vulture in the Dadia forest Area (SPA, candidate Natura 2000 site) in Thrace, Northern - Eastern Greece, has increased from 20 individuals in 1979 to about 100 individuals now, as a result of successful conservation action.

In this field the Ministry of the Environment has developed a productive cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Prefectural and Local Authorities and NGO's, namely WWF-Greece, with regard to active management, including:

- Implementation of species recovery plan
- Completion of integrated management environmental study for the raptors, amphibian, reptiles and the wooded area, in the frame of an ACNAT (E.U.) funded project (1993-1996).
- Elaboration of nature conservation oriented forest management plan, whilst the nesting sites are strictly protected.
- Monitoring and wardening of the all raptor species population; in this frame in 1998, 19 breeding pairs have been recorded, out of which six pairs have failed while the other 13 pairs, had successful breeding with fledglings.
- Construction of technical works, including a New Information Center, and the labelling of the protected area.
- Operation and monitoring of feeding places. During the period 1.7.98 up to 31.12.98, on a daily observation basis, 68 individuals have been recorded as maximum.
- Operation of the ECOTOURISTIC INFORMATION Center, with a full range of information, awareness and environmental education activities, runned by WWF-Greece.
- Voluntary contribution of NGO's (WWF-Greece) to forest-fire combat precautionary schemes, during summer.
- Elaboration of the final legal arrangement (i.e. Draft of Presidential Decree) for the establishment of the National Park in the area concerned, in accordance to the provisions of Law 1650/1986 on the Protection of the Environment

6. *Numenius tenuirostris* (Slender billed curlew)

A multinational partner project (1996-1998) has been carried out, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Hellenic Ornithological Society, the Greek Biotope - Wetland Center and Face, in six areas, namely Evros delta, Porto Lagos lagoon, Axios delta, Ismaris lake, Amvrakikos Gulf, Kalamas delta which have been designated SPA, candidate Natura 2000 and Ramsar (with the exception of Kalamas delta) sites.

The main fields of **ACTIVITIES** of the project were:

- Monitoring of the population study on the migration and emigration patterns.
- Technical proposal for conservation measures and preparation of the appropriate legal provisions, with target groups (hunters, farmers) and local services.
- Experimental satellite tracking, in one site only (Kerkini) on curlews, but not on the slender billed curlews.
- Information, education, public awareness.

The preparation of the final report is under progress and following that a post report, to the Bern Convention, will be submitted.

However, some key project activities are briefly presented:

- i. Regular monitoring of migrating/wintering shore birds in key sites** during the period 15th March - 15th May and 15th August to 15th October. In this context census, on a week basis, has been carried out for all the Waders (migratory) species.

- ii. Identification of management measures for increasing the carrying capacity of key sites** for the shore birds and in particular for slender-billed curlew. In this context priority measures have been identified and implemented in the Evros delta area, namely the restoration of drained Drana lagoon and the control of the overgrazing.
- iii. Identification of proposals of legal protection measures**, for the Axios and Evros deltas cases, which will be included in the current ones for these areas.
- iv. Enforcement of existing legal measures**, with regard hunting activities.
- v. Public Awareness Activities** for the dissemination of the results of the project and the general information within this in 5 language versions brochure (Greek, Italian, Russian, French, English) has been prepared and widely distributed.

Workshops for informing hunters have been organized with regard general information on the species range and habitat requirements. Production and distribution of information material for informed and general public are also listed in the relevant activities.

- i. Establishing liaison with the Life Project in Greece** for the Pygmy cormorant and the Lesser White Fronted Goose - and carrying out common field work/surveys, exchange of information.
- ii. Establishing liaison with International Conventions**, namely with the Bonn Convention, participating in the relevant Slender-billed Curlew Seminar, organized in Moscow in 1997.
- iii. Ecological Studies**, for the
 - Analysis of extinction risks on the basis of current information and available stochastic models, further evaluation of extinction risks
 - Determination of ecological constraints
 - Definition of study protocols for habitat selection and feeding ecology data

It is worthwhile to note, that during the project 6-8 records of the **Numerius tenuirostris**, taking into consideration that the last four years there are not records for elsewhere in the world, except for Greece.

7. *Pelecanus crispus* (Dalmatian pelican)

Long conservation efforts have been invested in three sites (all are SPA, candidate Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites) in Greece, namely **Kerkini lake** (wintering site), **Prespes lake** (breeding site-largest colony over the world) and **Amvrakikos Gulf** (breeding site).

Ringling is carried out in Amvrakikos Gulf and Prespes lakes and population dynamics as well for these two sites.

For all three sites legal conservation measures for the establishment of National Parks, are at the final stage.

7.1.a In Amvrakikos Gulf a LIFE-project (1999-2002) for the «Conservation-Management of Amvrakikos Wetlands» has been recently approved. With regard to the **Pelecanus crispus** and other five fauna species the **specific project objectives** are:

- Restoration of appropriate abiotic conditions and habitat structure in 3 lagoons (Rodia, Logarou, Tsoukalio).

- Restoration of appropriate habitat structure in marshland, water grassland and woodland for the benefit of *Agthya nyroca*, *Butarus stellaris*, *Aquila clanga*, *Aquila prmavina*, *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*.
- Conservation and long-term increase of the *Pelecanus crispus* population
- Effective safeguarding of the site against illegal activities and reduction of disturbance to priority bird species
- Increase the appreciation of the local communities for the site, in conservation values and the potential economic benefit from the sustainable use of the area.

Actions and means involved in achieving the above mentioned objectives are:

- Construction and operation of sluices and ditches for controlled freshwater input to the three lagoons; water quality and vegetation monitoring. Drafting of the Water Management Plan. Collaboration with Fishermen cooperatives
- Creation of artificial islets for *Pelecanus crispus* breeding; Wardening of the colonies throughout the breeding period; Burying of 12 km of electricity power lines underground
- Development and enforcement of a surveillance scheme on the site in collaboration of the Forestry Service and other Prefectural Authorities, Public Awareness campaign
- Operation of two Visitor Centres Organization of guided tours of selected spots of the area; Organization of workshops and technical meetings

b. In the frame of the Contractual Management Agreement (see point 1.3 of this report) awareness activities are planned (e.g. 26 information meetings with the local communities).

The Information Centre, at Koprena, has been equipped for a public tele-observation (Video-picture) of the breeding colony at Salaora.

c. The Hellenic Ornithological Society, has run a project on «Bird Conservation in the Amvrakikos». Wardening of the Dalmatian pelican breeding colony, monitoring of the foraging and roosting sites, public awareness activity, are the main activities of this project.

Conclusions have been drawn for the causes of disturbance to the breeding activity, the distribution of disturbance incidence during the day and the breeding season and proposals have been formulated with regard the wardening and conservation measure.

7.2. For **Kerkini**, with regard to the Recommendation No 60, point 11 Greece is asked to monitor water level fluctuation in Lake Kerkini in order to ensure appropriate water levels during the period March-August (a maximum water level of not more than 35 m.a.s.l was suggested in the relevant Action Plan).

The approved environmental condition No 30 (Joint Ministerial Decision No 81457/23.8.1995) for the anti-flooding technical works for the upper and lower stream of the Strymon river, the Kerkini lake and the torrents of the Serres plain area, the operation of the technical works and the conservation of the Kerkini lake ecosystem, states that the upper water level of Kerkini lake is fixed to 36 m.a.s.l provided that the realization of approved works for restoration and conservation of the lakes' forest ecosystem.

The Strymon river, is a transboundary river, whose major catchment area lies within Bulgaria. The river's upper reaches flow the Kerkini lake whilst the river's lower reaches flow from the lake, through the Serres plain area to the Strymonikos Gulf.

The above mentioned environmental condition No 30, is currently under a status of suspension, according to the relevant Decision of the authorized Director General of the Environment (No 65829/6.5.1999).

This suspension has been decided upon the purpose for an overall estimation of the optimum lake water level (a.s.l) on the basis of ecological criteria, in the context of the water management of the existing water resources, the sediment flow of the Strymon river related to the international aspects of the transboundary river. This estimation is expected by August 1999, so that to proceed for the re-examination of the conditions confronting the floods of the Kerkini lake as well.

8. *Larus audouinii* (Audouin's gull)

Greece holds the largest population of *Larus audouinii* in Eastern Mediterranean, according to the existing information through the extensive work of the Hellenic Ornithological Society (H.O.S) in the Aegean (started in 1995 with private funds continued in 1996 with funds of the Ministry of the Environment and from 1996-1999, with the LIFE Project «Conservation of *Larus audouinii* in Greece»).

The project covers five candidate Natura 2000 sites (out of which three are SPA' also) in the Aegean sea and more precisely in the area of the Kithira island, the Northern Dodecanese islands, the Southern Aegean rocky islets complex, the Northern Amorgos island. Furthermore, the Northern and Eastern Aegean area as well as the Central and Southern Dodecanese islands area are covered by a H.O.S self funded project for *Larus audouinii*.

In the final project report the complete picture on the species demographic data, range, threats, conservation measures, will be presented. However a general presentation follows, on the basis of the current information.

It seems that the species population ranges between 700-900 pairs. The birds breed almost exclusively on uninhabited islets, which are close to larger inhabited islands. The exact number of colonies is not easily defined, because birds usually change nesting site from year to year. Based on the information and data gathered during the last five years, 25 distinct colonies are registered and the birds have nested in 45 distinct islets. There are some indications for slight local increase of the population; however to a large extent, such an increase is owed only to a better field work coverage. As so far, there is not evidence that the species breeds outside the Aegean Sea, but it is likely that one or two small colonies exist in Western Greece.

It is very likely that the species is affected by the fish stocks depletion. At the same time it can not exploit the discarded fish, by trawlers, due to the competition, with the extremely abundant. Yellow-legged Gulls *Larus cachinans*. The latter seems to be a competitor for nesting sites, at least on local scale. Predation on eggs and chicks, by Yellow-legged Gulls and Hooded Gulls *Corvus corone comix*, occur but is not known how significant it is. Most likely it affects more the heavily disturbed colonies. Natural predation on juvenile individuals, mainly by Peregrine Falcons, *Falco peregrinus*, can be very serious at a local scale. Grazing on the islets is also a problem, but from the point of view of presence - disturbance of shepherds and dogs.

With respect to the conservation action, the ongoing Life-project is targeting to the protection of the colonies, in two main areas, i.e. the Northern - Western Dodecaneses and the Southern Cyclades and Kithira areas). It includes, in total 8 colonies and up to 300 pairs.

Conservation action comprises at the present, during the project's execution, wardening, sorting-out disturbance problems (e.g. with shepherds, fishermen, tourist organizations) and public awareness, which is extremely important (focusing on revealing the importance of the uninhabited islets for this species).

For all the five Natura 2000 sites Specific Environmental Studies are carried out, as requested by Law 1650/1986, for the justification of the appropriate legal conservation measures (connected also with tourism and fishing activities) in view of the establishment of protected areas.

9. *Phalacrocorax Pygmaeus* (Pygmy cormorant) *Anser erythropus* (Lesser white fronted goose)

A LIFE project (1996-1999) on the conservation of these two species in Greece with positive side effect on the protection of *Branta ruficollis* (Red-breasted goose) is carried out by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, and WWF-Greece with the active support of the Ministries of the Environment and Agriculture.

The project covers 10 key sites (SPAs, candidate NATURA 2000 and Ramsar sites), namely: Kalamas delta, Prespa lakes, Petron lake, Kastoria lake, Axios delta, Kerkini lake, Nestos delta, Port Lagos lagoon, Ismaris lake and Evros delta.

The main **ACTION FIELDS** of the project, are: surveillance, wardening - with volunteers' participation, public information/awareness immediate technical conservation measures, elaboration of National Action Plan and of the appropriate legal conservation measures based on the results of the field work of the project, pending of course the final report, we have a clear picture, as follows:

9.1 *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*

- i. Population range in Greece and for each related wetland area
- ii. Population distribution in feeding resting (during the wintering period) and breedings
- iii. Identification of feeding, breeding and wintering sites
- iv. Threats and limiting factors

The maximum wintering population (major part of the European breeding population) in the Greek wetlands for the period 1997-1998 was 38, 917 individuals. The Pygmy cormorants are gradually arriving in Greece, in October for the wintering period and are starting to leave in April. Wintering population, figures in each wetland as percentage of the total wintering population are:

Evros delta (69.4% - 76.9%), Axios delta (17%-18.7%), Mikra Prespa lake (9.3%-10.9%), Kerkini lake (6.8%) and complex of Vistonis lake - Porto Lagos lagoon and Ismaris lake (6.2%-6.8%). In the Kastoria lake area less 700 individuals have wintered whilst in the Petron lake area the relevant figure ranged between 7-37 individuals

The breeding population ranged in 1987 between 1250-1310 pairs and in 1998 between 1170-1230 pairs. The greater part is related to Mikra Prespa lake (730-780 for 1997 and 650-700 in 1998). In Kerkini lake 500 pairs (1997,1998) have breded, whilst in the Petron lake 15-30 pairs have breded,

Ringed has been applied in 42 juvenile individuals in the Kerkini lake.

The assessment of the threats and problems has revealed the nature of the problems and has oriented the elaboration of the conservation measures.

The main problems are:

- **Degradation of riparian/lake shore** forests, due to sand taking, illegal tree cutting, irrational animal grazing,
- **Disturbance**, due to illegal hunting frequent human presence in the nearby feeding sites, angling in certain areas, fishing (some times illegal) activities close to breeding sites, as well as bird watching visits near the breeding sites.

- **Reduction in feeding sites**, due to landfilling and technical works
- **Changes in the hydrological regime**, due to temporal intermittent river water flow because of dams, lake water level drop (Petron lake), sea water intrusion (Ismaris lake) irrational water resources use, water pollution, burning of thickets of reeds.

The NATIONAL ACTION PLAN, as the component of the LIFE PROJECT, is based on the relevant Birdlife Action Plan.

It comprises comprehensive list of actions and activities for each of the 10 wetland sites in the field of:

- Policy and legislation related inter alia to sustainable economic activities with regard the species conservation needs
 - Monitoring and research
 - Species and its related habitats conservation measures
 - Information and awareness

Meanwhile, during the period 1996-1999 non-recurring biotope management oriented technical works have been completed in all the project area; such works are tree planting (riparian forests), creation of feeding sites, reed bed management, riparian forest management, fencing, installation of Pygmy cormorants nests.

9.2 ANSER ERYTHROPUS

Following the same principles for the field work, in the frame of the Life project, we have now knowledge on the wintering population, the feeding and wintering habitat requirements and the population distribution in the wintering and feeding sites and the main pressures/threats.

With regard to the winter population counts, in Kerkini lake 270 individuals have been recorded in 1998, in Evros delta two records have been reported in 1998 and lastly in Ismaris lake - the maximum recorder figure for 1998-1999 is 910 individuals.

In all three wetland areas the feeding sites have been identified. The main problem of these areas, with regard to species conservation are:

- **Decrease in feeding areas**, due to reduction at grass meadows,
- **Disturbance**, due to illegal hunting, visitors and in few cases, deliberate disturbance caused by the farmers

The elaborated National Action Plan comprises proposals for:

- Inventory of the damages caused by geese in general and development of a compensation scheme for the farmers.
- Development of international cooperation for promoting the species monitoring and conservation
- Grass meadow management
- Monitoring in the main wintering sites

The realization of conservation measures is foreseen in the frame of the 3rd Community Structural Fund - 2000-2006.

HUNGARY / HONGRIE



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Biennial Report (1997–1998) to the Bern Convention

Compiled by Dr Gábor Magyar

RECOMMENDATION NO. 48 (adopted on 26 January 1996) on the conservation of European globally threatened birds

Carrying out national action plans on European globally threatened birds

Although no published national action plans exist as yet for globally threatened species in Hungary, there are ongoing programs by official nature conservation authorities and preference is given also to grant applications (by the Central Environment Fund) aiming at the protection programs of these species. BirdLife Hungary has also set priority to the conservation of these species.

Numenius tenuirostris

Although an annual vagrant these days only, migrating flocks of Curlews are surveyed for this species. Recent sightings were almost exclusively on protected sites. Attempts have been made to put Virágoskút fishpond under legal protection as relevant site for Pygmy Cormorant (possible nesting), Lesser White-fronted Goose (annual autumn staging ground) and Slender-billed Curlew (two of the recent records were on this fishponds). Parts of the pond system has been annexed to the Hortobágy National Park in 1998.

Phalacrocorax pygmeus

Survey for the breeding population (35 nests found in 1998 on Hortobágy fishponds, one pair breeding probably in Kis-Balaton). For the prevention of accidental killing of this species and of Glossy Ibises, eradication by shooting of Cormorants is prohibited on the Hortobágy-fishponds. Nests and food supply for the species are in a favourable status on these fishponds. The population is steadily increasing.

Aquila heliaca

Annual survey of nesting birds (53 pairs in 1998). Introduction of insulation coats to traverses of medium voltage electric power lines, introduction of artificial nests, re-introduction of Shushlik (*Spermophilus citellus*) as main prey item to areas it had become extinct, guarding of those nests exposed to disturbance.

Otis tarda

Bird census on lekking grounds in spring (ca. 1200 birds in 1998, stable). Ploughing of snow in the winter, planting rape on important areas as main winter feed, prevention of cutting grass during the incubation period, saving eggs from deserted nests and artificial incubation in the Great Bustard repatriation centre, subsidies to farmers, dissemination of information on importance of bustard protection.

Acrocephalus paludicola

Annual survey of singing males (637 in 1998, steadily increasing), proper area management practices (cutting and harvest of grass with no disturbance to breeding birds in the area).

Crex crex

Regional surveys of the species based on calling males, distribution of brochures to farmers on proper practices (grass harvest e.g.) to prevent or at least minimize damage to nests (run by BirdLife Hungary).

Oxyura leucocephala, Pelecanus crispus, Anser erythropus, Branta ruficollis, Aegypius monachus, Falco naumanni

These species are stragglers or accidentals in Hungary. They are strictly protected by national law, their hunting, deliberate killing or collection is forbidden. Records of occurrence are collected by the Hungarian Checklist and Rarities Committee of BirdLife Hungary.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 60 (adopted on 5 December 1997) on the implementation of the action plans for globally threatened birds in Europe**1. include key sites for the relevant species**

Protected areas have been designated to Slender-billed Curlew (also new one in 1998), Pygmy Cormorant (all of the nesting birds), Red-breasted Goose (most of observations inside protected areas), Lesser White-fronted Goose (majority within protected areas, but also new one in 1998: Virágoskút fishponds), Imperial Eagle, Great Bustard, Aquatic Warbler (almost exclusively inside protected areas), Corncrake.

Parts of Hortobágy is listed as *Ramsar site* providing nesting habitat for Pygmy Cormorant and for Aquatic Warbler, and staging ground for Lesser White-fronted Goose, Red-breasted Goose (many of recent Hungarian records of Slender-billed Curlews are from Ramsar sites also).

Hungary is one of the accession countries applying for EU membership. Before joining the EU, Hungary has to designate *Special Protection Areas* for the protection of Pygmy Cormorant, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Imperial Eagle, Great Bustard, Aquatic Warbler, Corncrake. The survey has been started for designating those sites.

2. promote collaboration with the relevant NGOs

Although no published action plans exist for these species yet, protection programmes for Imperial Eagle, Great Bustard and Corncrake are ongoing in a combined effort of the Nature Conservation Bureau of the Ministry for Environment, its regional national park directorates and BirdLife Hungary.

It involves annual census of Imperial Eagle and Great Bustard, survey on potential threats to nests, and for the Great Bustard habitat management (ploughing of snow in the winter, planting rape on important areas as main winter feed, prevention of cutting grass during the incubation period, saving eggs from deserted nests and artificial incubation in the Great Bustard Repatriation Centre, subsidies to farmers, dissemination of information on importance of bustard protection etc.) for Imperial Eagle and other endangered raptor species introduction of insulation coats to traverses of pylons of medium voltage electric power lines, artificial nests, re-introduction of Sushlik (*Spermophilus citellus*) guarding of those nests exposed to disturbance.

For Aquatic Warbler habitat management is carried out by the Hortobágy National Park (the species breeds almost exclusively inside the boundaries of the HNP), but activists of NGOs help in the annual survey of singing males.

3. promote appropriate agricultural policies

Agricultural practices play a relevant role in the protection of Corncrake and Great Bustard (other birds, Aquatic Warbler, Red-breasted Goshawk, Lesser White-fronted Goose breed or stage on migration mostly in protected areas).

Brochures are distributed to farmers involved by BirdLife Hungary how to prevent damage of nests of the two species. Subsidies were paid to those farmers willing to produce rape in SE Hungary by BirdLife Hungary from a grant received from the Central Environment Fund.

BirdLife Hungary and RSPB have set up a Land Stewardship Advisory Service from a Phare Partnership Programme in order to better protect Important Bird Areas in Hungary.

4. enforce existing hunting and conservation regulations

All relevant species are strictly protected in Hungary. A brochure had been published to Hungarian, and in four different languages (German, English, French, Italian) to foreign hunters about how to hunt in Hungary (identification key to huntable species, hunting seasons, legislation etc.) and is distributed to hunters free of charge.

Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)

20. to ensure the reduction of mortality from electrocution by power lines

The majority of casualties are caused by electrocution of medium power electric lines. About 15% of traverses of such power pylons are insulated in Hungary, predominantly in areas of nesting endangered raptors (Saker Falcon, Imperial Eagle etc.), therefore threat is diminished in the most exposed areas. The program has been continued, progress depends on the funds available for the purpose.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 61 (adopted on 5 December 1997) on the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)

The White-headed Duck is extinct as a breeding species from Hungary since 1960. Even records of accidentals were missing in some years. In recent years stragglers were reported annually during migration or wintering.

There is only one verified record of Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in Hungary: March 2, 1997 Hortobágy, fishponds

The number of stragglers of Ruddy Duck is not expected to increase, and is very unlikely that breeding will ever occur. Since at the moment White-headed Ducks do not breed in Hungary either (the closest breeding birds are more than a 1000 km away from Hungary), a danger for crossbreeding between the two species in Hungary is negligible.

Actions for eradication of the species

At the moment the role of Hungary is to build a buffer zone between the eastern breeding range of White-headed Duck and the range of the introduced population of Ruddy Duck, i.e. to play role in preventing Ruddy Ducks to reach the Middle East population of White-headed Duck.

The Ruddy Duck is not protected in Hungary by nature conservation law. In case individual(s) of Ruddy Duck will be staging in Hungary, attempts will be made for their capture or eradication by shooting (when hunting season will be declared). (The observed individual disappeared by the time it was reported, thus no action for taking it out from the wild was possible.)

ITALY / ITALIE

Implementation of Bird Action Plans

Referring to your invitation to the next meeting of the Group of Experts on Conservation of Birds due for May 18-19 in Strasbourg, we are sorry to inform you that Italian experts are not participating, due to the coincidence of other international engagements.

Nevertheless we want to forward you our remarks and informations concerning this Action Plans related to Key species given to us by our experts.

Italy hosts relevant populations of the following species:

Lesser Kestrel – it. name: grillaio – *Falco naumanni*

Projects of public awareness for the conservation of this species have been realised within LIFE. Italy has instituted some Special Protection Zones (ZPS) some of them covering nearly completely the area of distribution of the main nesting colonies and feeding ground in Puglia and Basilicata. NGO involved LIPU.

Corncrake – it. name: Re di Quaglie – *Crex crex*

The monitoring of this species is partially followed by the faunistic observatory of Udine (Friuli Venezia Giulia) and by LIPU.

Slender billed curlew – it. name: Chiurlottello – *Numenius tenuirostris*

This species appears during the migration period in some wetzones of Puglia and Tuscany in relatively relevant numbers in respect of the overall world population. A tentative campaign of protection was organised at local level in 1997. The Corpo Forestale dello Stato (CFS) is conducting an action anti poaching in Saline of Margherita di Savoia. More action is needed to search more co-operation and engagements of local authorities.

Audouin's Gull – it. name: Gabbiano corso – *Larus audouinii*

Recent institution of Arcipelago Toscano National Park and Maddalena National Park has given a relevant contribution to the species conservation. Relationship with *Larus cachinnans* (Gabbiano reale mediterraneo) should be better studied.

All these species, for the moment, are lacking a national action plan. However an increasing number of ZPS is foreseen within the framework of implementation of Directive 79/409. Actually the ZPS's are 202 for a total surface of 800,000. As far as the Action Plans presented within the framework of the Bern Convention and Directive UE 79/409 the involvement of our country concerns five species (Bittern, Ferruginous Duck, Lammergeier, Bonelli's Eagle, Little Bustard).

Further information will be given soon on these species within the framework of Ornithological Committee.

Best regards

DIRECTOR OF DIVISION II
(Dott. Alessandro Russi)

LUXEMBOURG

RECOMMANDATION N° 48 du Comité permanent, adoptée le 26 janvier 1996, sur la conservation des oiseaux d'Europe mondialement menacés

Les plans d'action sur les oiseaux mondialement menacés en Europe se portent sur 24 espèces, dont une seulement présente au Luxembourg : *Crex crex*, en tant que migrateur.

Le Rôle des Genêts (*Crex crex*) niche à travers toute l'Europe et hiverne pratiquement toujours en Afrique tropicale. Entre 1970 et 1990, une nette régression de 50 % de la population a malheureusement été constatée sur l'ensemble de l'Europe, notamment en Grande-Bretagne, en Irlande, en Belgique, en Hollande et au Grand-Duché du Luxembourg. Au Luxembourg, la population encore existante est évaluée à moins de 25 % de celle de 1970. Avant 1960, le rôle des genêts avait été entendu sur quelque 14 sites différents au Grand-Duché du Luxembourg. En juin 1979, 5 mâles chantaient sur un pré de fauche près de la localité de Fentange.

Sur le plan national, le Roeserbann (une partie de la **plaine alluviale de l'Alzette supérieure**) est d'une importance capitale, vu qu'il s'agit de l'unique site luxembourgeois, où un à deux mâles chanteurs sont recensés chaque année.

- Début 1999, la «Vallée supérieure de l'Alzette» a été désignée comme zone de protection spéciale oiseaux au titre de la directive «communautaire Oiseaux» (désignation le 18 janvier 1999).**

Description scientifique du site :

Le site s'étend sur 6 communes du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg et comprend essentiellement la plaine alluviale de l'Alzette supérieure (avant son entrée dans le grès du Luxembourg) entre les villes d'Esch-sur-l'Alzette et Luxembourg, ainsi que les zones d'embouchures des affluents *Mess*, *Diddelenger Bach*, *Kaylbach*.

Cette plaine alluviale de l'Alzette est caractérisée actuellement par son cours d'eau canalisé, déplacé sur plusieurs tronçons en bordure de la plaine. Des fossés ou anciens canaux de moulin drainent l'ensemble du site. De grandes surfaces sont également drainées par un réseau de tuyaux souterrains. Ponctuellement subsistent des vestiges des formations naturelles originelles, à savoir *l'Alno-Ulmion*, *les Nanocyperion*, *les Bidentetalia*, *le Phragmition*, *les Molinietalia*.

Le niveau de la nappe phréatique est fort bas, permettant une exploitation intensive des prairies et pâturages d'avril à octobre. Sur les couches géologiques repose une couche d'alluvions pouvant atteindre une épaisseur de 4 à 5 mètres. La sédimentation se poursuit de nos jours par les inondations périodiques. Les alluvions sont composées de sables fins et d'argiles.

Le niveau est fonction de la profondeur de la couche imperméable sous-jacente ainsi que par le niveau des eaux de l'Alzette. En période de hautes précipitations, le niveau de la nappe peut monter jusqu'à la surface du sol et même la dépasser. Les sols développés sur les alluvions font partie des gleys : l'influence permanente de l'eau entraîne une mauvaise aération. Toutefois, après un drainage efficace, les alluvions fournissent des terres agricoles fertiles grâce à leur teneur en argile.

L'occupation des sols est essentiellement agricole, avec dans la plaine de l'Alzette une prédominance des prés et pâturages (bien que la culture de maïs commence à s'y développer). Les flancs des collines adjacentes sont pris par les labours. Le pourcentage de forêts est extrêmement faible (moins de 3 %). Néanmoins, la zone est en partie structurée par des haies, des allées de peupliers et par la végétation ripicole.

Importance du site pour la conservation de l'espèce/type d'habitat visé à l'échelle régionale, nationale et communautaire

Le caractère humide des prairies entraîne une diversité floristique et faunistique et toute la plaine constitue un biotope important pour de nombreuses espèces de l'avifaune, notamment pour le râle des genêts (*Crex crex*) une espèce de l'annexe 1 de la Directive Oiseaux. Mais des espèces telles que le pipit farlouse (*Anthus pratensis*), la Bergeronnette printanière (*Motacilla flava*) et le traquet tarier (*Saxicola rubetra*) sont des espèces typiques des grandes étendues d'herbages ou des prairies et pâturages plus ou moins humides.

2. Projet de revalorisation écologique de la Vallée supérieure de l'Alzette

En vue de coordonner les activités et de motiver les autorités locales, le Luxembourg a préparé en 1998 un projet pour la «Revalorisation écologique de la Vallée supérieure de l'Alzette». Un dossier de candidature a été proposé dans le cadre du programme d'aides financières de la Communauté LIFE 98. Ce projet LIFE-Râle des genêts constituera une priorité pour la protection de la nature au Luxembourg pendant les prochaines années. Les ornithologues se promettent une amélioration nette de l'habitat pour le Râle des genêts ainsi que pour nombre d'oiseaux nicheurs des prairies humides. Le projet, d'une envergure de 227 millions, est porté par la Fondation Hëllef fir d'Natur, fondation qui vient de fêter avec succès son 15e anniversaire. Il est soutenu par le ministère de l'Environnement, le ministère de l'Agriculture ainsi que par toutes les communes concernées : Hesperange, Roeser, Bettembourg, Schiffflange et Mondercange.

MOLDOVA

prepared by Ion BEJENARU, Deputy Head, Environmental Impact and Nature Conservation Division

The implementation of Bird Action Plans in Republic of Moldova has been made through following actions:

1. Was elaborated the legislative acts:
 - “The Law on state natural protected areas fund” which included the Lists of the all protected species, inclusively 89 birds species, which are the part of the III category of IUCN natural protected areas. In Red Book of Moldova has been included 39 birds species.

All protected species was classificated in 8 IUCN category.

The IUCN protected areas category and the IUCN protected species category are an indispensable part of the Law on state natural protected areas fund of the Republic of Moldova.

- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova regarding the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova.
 - Regulation of the rare species, that are exposed to danger and vulnerable species in the Republic of Moldova.
2. For protection of the natural habitats of the birds was organised 3 protected areas along of the Prut River of which area is 7.855 ha.

All that actions covered partially the Recommendations 48, 60, 61 and 62 of the Standing Committee.

3. In the future for more detailed information it is necessary to study all aspects of this problem by a special Project.

PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL MAINLAND

by Márcia Pinto, Instituto da Conservação da Natureza

Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*)

Monitoring and research

The Portuguese population is regularly monitored since 1994. The studies and programs developed include productivity assessment of 3 colonies (Mértola, Belver and Messejana), ringing program, interspecific competition studies and diet studies.

In the last 4 years the Portuguese population remained stable, with local colony increasing (Castro Verde) and decreasing (Mértola).

Species and habitat protection

Conservation measures have been carried out in some of the major colonies of the species in Portugal, particularly:

Mértola (50-60 couples – 1998). Colony inside Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana. Several conservation actions carried out by this Natural Park including: Habitat management, availability of artificial nests, control of interspecific competition with Jackdaws, recovery of injured nestlings. In this colony, the majority of the nests are located in the S. Francisco Convent, where the owners have carried out in the last years, and nowadays in collaboration with ICN, appreciable conservation efforts.

Recently (2-3 years ago) an artificial tower was built in Convento de S. Francisco with support from international NGO's.

Castro Verde (50-60 couples – 1998). At least seven colonies reported. Also a Zonal Programme is in operation under European Union Regulation 2078/92 (half of the area is already submitted by local farmers).

Conservation measures taken by Portuguese NGO LPN (Liga para a Protecção da Natureza) under Life/Nature Fund and technically supported by the Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana include:

- construction of two artificial towers for Lesser Kestrels
- Maintenance of old buildings that support colonies
- Opening of new nest holes
- Habitat management

Messejana (40 couples). Colony also inside the Castro Verde site. Few conservation actions taken including nest opening and monitoring.

Évora (10-15 couples). Local conservation actions taken by NGO LPN-Alentejo and including opening of new nests, restoration of old buildings and availability of artificial nests. This area is not included in any of the SPA's designated by Portugal. More recovery works are expected in the future through collaboration between LPN – Alentejo and Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana.

Campo Maior. Major survey of the area expected in 1999 (to be carried out by Parque Natural da Serra de S. Mamede) in order to achieve the present status of the species.

Matters where urgent action is required:

- Establishment of a legal protection to all colonies with more than 10 couples.
- Rehabilitation of potential hunting areas in Mértola (land use modification through Reg. 2080/92/CE is changing hunting areas leading to a productivity loss of Mértola colony).
- Achievement of a management plan for the Évora colony, where is expected a great land use transformation through irrigation (this area has no legal protection status).
- Achievement of a management plan for the Messejana colony in order to allow the compatibilization between the projected highway (expected to pass nearby the colony) and the actual land use.
- Restoration work in the buildings that support the colonies (specially Messejana), nest opening and disponibilization of artificial nests.

Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*)*Population situation*

The last estimates indicate 82 to 100 pairs of Bonelli's Eagles in Portugal in the mid-nineties (Palma *et al.* in press.). We believe that the national population is mainly stable, although locally the species shows trends of regression or increment.

Monitoring of the breeding situation

In order to obtain information about the breeding success of the Bonelli's Eagle in Portugal, its breeding have been monitored in two areas: Northeast and Central East of the country.

From 40% to 50% of the national population is estimated to breed in these two areas of the distribution range (see Monteiro *et al.* in press., Pacheco *et al.* in press.).

Creation of new protected areas

In 1998 the Douro Internacional Natural Park was created (Decreto Reg. 8/98 de 11 de Maio). In this new protected area breed 13 to 14 pairs of Bonelli's Eagle (Monteiro 1996), a species that already benefits from management measures applied. In course is the creation of a new protected area in a region, generally dominated as Tejo Internacional, in the Central East part of the country.

Food availability recovery

Considering that in the Northeast of Portugal the species seems to show a relatively low breeding success, two projects are being developed with the aim of recovering some of their preys.

Through the recovery and the restock of the traditional constructions for the production of Rock Dove *Columba livia*, is claimed to recover one the main prey of the Bonelli's Eagle in the region. According to this project in course, launched in 1997, there is already a restock of a quite significant number of traditional dovecote (95), that until then were abandoned. The introduced Rock Dove and the recovered structures are submitted to a periodic sanitary control.

For the recovery of the Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* populations some protocols are in phase of elaboration between the Douro Internacional Natural Park (ICN) and some Game Reserves in the Northeast of the country. In this way measures that aim a correct management of the habitat and the hunting activities are going to be applied in order to increase the population effective of those prey species.

Other projects still in course aim to recover the abundance of Rabbits in other areas, having as the main objective the conservation of other threatened species. Nevertheless, these actions will probably have positive consequences in the breeding success of the local pairs.

Evaluation of the impact of the electrocution in the medium tension electric network

The electrocution in poles of the electric energy lines is recognised as one of the main threats to the European populations of Bonelli's Eagle. In Portugal there is still the need of identifying the most dangerous poles of the electric network for this raptor.

In the Northeast of the country a project was started recently with the aim of identifying the lines that cause the major mortalities in this and other threatened species. This information seems essential in the support of proposals that aim the diminishing of this mortality factor.

Environmental education

The environmental awareness and education of the Portuguese population is, in general, considered as very low. One of the most evident demonstrations of this situation is the illegal shooting of birds of prey by hunters and Game Reserves guards. At lay term the impact of this mortality factor in the national population of Bonelli's Eagle can only be diminished through much more environmental awareness of local populations, as well as through a rigorous inspection system of the most important areas for this species.

Almost all of the Portuguese Protected Areas, in particular the Douro Internacional Natural Park, have accomplished several sessions of environmental awareness in schools, trying to educate the younger levels of the society for the importance that birds of prey constitute in the ecosystems.

Surveillance

Inside the Portuguese Protected Areas, and particularly in the Northwest of Portugal, some systematic vigilance actions have been undertaken in the areas of the occupied nests of Bonelli's Eagles. These activities, starting in the 1997's breeding season, aim to assure low disturbance of the pairs and to prevent nest taking.

Legislation

One of the major factors of disturbance in the most important breeding areas of Bonelli's Eagles - Northeast of Portugal - is undoubtedly the river navigation in the Douro river.

In order to conciliate the conservation of this raptor with other interests, namely tourism and traditional and sport fishing, is actually in course the elaboration of a document for the regulation of the navigation in that water course.

Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)

Breeding population

After being considered extinct as a breeding species in Portugal, the first breeding attempt of Cinereous Vulture occurred in 1996 in two different areas: Eastern Alentejo and Malcata Mountains Nature Reserve. These breeding attempts took place in artificial nest platforms set up as an action plan aiming the re-establishment of the species in the Portuguese territory. In both areas eggs were laid but no chicks were raised.

To date there are no records of subsequent breeding attempts in Portugal, most probably due to human disturbance and inadequate habitat management practices. In the Malcata Mountains Reserve there are strong evidences of human disturbance, which involved the destruction of the nest contents, and caused the breeding failure in 1996.

Limiting factors

The lack of additional breeding attempts is most likely related to forestation activities, which affected large areas and represented an important source of disturbance. Nonetheless, the Institute of Nature Conservation is very committed to control the existing limiting factors, in order to encourage natural re-colonisation. Given that the forestation activities have stopped, it will be possible to ensure an adequate protection of the Cinereous Vulture, and especially to reach our main objective: the re-establishment of the Cinereous breeding population in Portugal.

Food availability

In the Malcata Mountains Nature Reserve there is a running project aiming the Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* recovery, that surely will benefit the Cinereous Vulture.

Also a great effort has been made to increase food availability, by means of insuring the supply of the “vulture feeding stations”.

Environmental Education

In a general way, most of the environmental education is accomplished by national protected areas. It focus the importance of the conservation of nature and the need to protect the birds of prey and their habitats.

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

Monitoring and research

The most important Great Bustard site in Portugal is in Castro Verde, where 60% of the national population is estimated to breed. Monitoring and annual counts have been carried out ensuring accurate data on numbers and population trends. Numbers have remained stable. It is in preparation a national census for the year 2000.

Habitat use and selection are being studied in Castro Verde. Monitoring of the effects of habitat protection measures have been carried out.

Species and habitat protection

In Castro Verde, the Great Bustard has benefited from agri-environmental measures in the framework of the EU Common Agriculture Policy. It includes a land management program with incentives to farmers in the way to preserve traditional land uses favourable to the species. In this area the afforestation is conditioned. Grazing levels on pasture lands and the use of agrochemicals are regulated. The timing of agricultural practices has been adapted according to the breeding cycle of the species. A LIFE project coordinated by the *Liga da Protecção da Natureza* is running.

Environmental Education

In Castro Verde site several educational actions have been carried out by NGOs for local people. Specific campaigns providing information on the biological characteristics of the Great Bustard and the importance of preserving the species have been made for farmers associations and schools.

Urgent actions

The main Great Bustard sites should be considered as SPA under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/CEE). Some of the main sites including Campo Maior, Mourão/Moura/Barrancos and Castro Verde are considered by the Portuguese Administration for eventual designation as SPA. The appropriate management must be ensured in the most important Great Bustard areas.

Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*)

Monitoring and research

Habitat use and selection are being studied in Campo Maior (north Alentejo) and Castro Verde (south Alentejo). Monitoring of the effects of habitat protection measures has been carried out. A national census has been recently organized for the year 2000.

Species and habitat protection and Environmental Education

As for the Great Bustard, the Little Bustard in Castro Verde has benefited from agri-environmental measures in the framework of EU Common Agriculture Policy and the same educational actions have been carried out by NGOs for local people.

Urgent actions

Some of the main Little Bustard sites including Campo Maior, Mourão/Moura/Barrancos, Castro Verde and Vale do Guadiana are now considered by the Portuguese Administration for eventual designation as SPA under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/CEE). All these sites should benefit of an appropriate management plan.

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REGIÃO AUTÓNOMA DA MADEIRA

Freira Conservation Project

This Freira Conservation Project kept their work with the two threatened *Pterodromas* of the archipelago. The more relevant work was done with the *P. madeira*. The key points were:

The University of Manchester started in depth work on the rat populations in the area with funding from a PNM, through a LIFE project.

Cats continued to be a serious problem and though several were trapped, one cat managed to kill and eat an adult petrel above the “Main Ledge”. This is of particular concern as the loss of an adult breeding bird may have serious consequences on the future of the colony.

These last years Eco-tourism started to become a major problem and large groups of people were found in the breeding area at night

The start of the 1998 breeding season augured well with a high occupancy of nests, but final results were very disappointing, for no obvious reason. Only 4 chicks fledged and it was only possible to ring three of these. The fourth chick was in too deep a burrow.

Night trips to the display areas were carried out and bird calls noted, but no birds were trapped in the nets. Early in the season three birds were caught on their nests on the “Main Ledge”. One was a recapture and the other two were new birds.

Population models were used to analyse data collected by the FCP over the previous 12 years. The results were discussed at a meeting in December in Madeira.

In December 1998 a one-day meeting was held in Funchal. RSPB helped fund travel and hotel costs. The meeting was given considerable cover by local television and press and proved to be very useful. The day following the meeting the FCP arranged a field trip to the Bugio with the help of the Portuguese Airforce who provided free transport in their Puma helicopter.

As a result of the pressure brought on the Government by the FCP and the PNM an announcement, in the press, was made in late March 1999, stating that it would now be forbidden to visit the breeding area of Zino’s Petrel at night, unless accompanied by a warden. This should help the FCP.

Madeira Laurel Pigeon

In what regards policy, legislation and habitat/species protection, the Madeira Natural Park increased the protection status of some key areas. The preparatory work that made these changes possible was funded by a Life Program.

Contact with local farmers has been maintained as well as the efforts to change people’s attitude towards the Madeira Laurel Pigeon. Many educational campaigns were carried out.

After a long period of experiments many scaring devices and “protection nets” (physical barriers) were made available, freely, to the farmers. This programmes were funded by Life project.

In what regards monitoring and research, with the funds of a Life programme the investigations on the ecology and biology of this species was intensified.

SENEGAL

REPUBLIQUE DU SENEGAL

N°

MINISTERE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET DE
LA PROTECTION DE LA NATURE

DIRECTION DES PARCS NATIONAUX

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Objet: Rapport biennal sur l'application des plans d'actions sur les oiseaux

En réponse à votre courrier du 3 mars 1999, voici les éléments essentiels à retenir pour le Sénégal dans le cadre de la mise en application des recommandations n°48, 60, 61 et 62.

Parmi les espèces mentionnées dans l'annexe de la recommandation n°48, deux espèces sont intéressées par le territoire du Sénégal : il s'agit du *Larus audouini* et du *Falco naumanii*. Cependant, le Sénégal n'apparaît pas dans les pays mentionnés à la recommandation n° 60.

A l'heure actuelle, aucun plan national spécifique à ces deux espèces n'existe et n'est envisagé. En fait, outre la protection et l'aménagement des 6 parcs et 4 réserves totalisant 8% du territoire national, le Sénégal s'attache principalement à la sauvegarde des zones humides, en particulier celles accueillant des populations significatives d'oiseaux d'eau.

C'est dans ce contexte que chaque année les dénombrements d'oiseaux d'eau couvrent une grande part des zones humides. Ainsi en janvier 1999, près de 340 goélands d'Audouin ont été dénombrés sur les bancs sableux du Sine Saloum. Ceux-ci sont situés dans la Réserve de la Biosphère du delta du Saloum (RBDS), pour laquelle la Direction des Parcs Nationaux et l'UICN œuvrent (dans le cadre du Programme Zones Humides de l'UICN) à l'élaboration d'un plan de gestion intégré, visant à concilier exploitation des ressources et préservation de la biodiversité.

La zone terrestre de cette RBDS offre également de grands espaces d'accueil au *Falco naumanii*, tout comme la zone du Ferlo, où s'étend la Réserve de faune du Ferlo Nord sur plus de 600.000 ha. Un plan de gestion intégré de cette réserve vient d'être élaborer et est en cours de mise en œuvre, avec l'appui de la coopération Danoise (DANIDA).

Ainsi le Sénégal ne dispose pas de plans d'actions spécifiques mais il s'efforce d'assurer la protection des écosystème sur près de 8% du territoire, ce qui contribue largement à la sauvegarde des espaces qui accueillent les espèces migratrices européennes.

SLOVAQUIE / SLOVAKIA

In 1997 development of action plans for protected birds species (according to the Recommendation No. 48/1996) started co-ordinated by (1) the Slovak Environmental Agency-Centre for Nature and Landscape Protection and (2) the Society for Protection of Birds in Slovakia (SOVS). The role of SOVS was important not only for its expertise but also with respect to application of the BirdLife program and procedures. Various experts participated as well, for example those working in the Group of Protection of Birds of Prey and Owls.

In the first phase “selection” of species with high international priority has been done. 4 globally endangered species (category SPEC 1) were “selected” – *Otis tarda*, *Aquila heliaca*, *Crex crex*, *Aythya nyroca* and 1 species from endangered species of European interest (category SPEC 2) – *Aquila pomarina*.

Current state of the 5 action plans is the following:

- *Otis tarda* – ready
- *Aquila heliaca* – ready
- *Crex crex* – developed but not approved
- *Aquila pomarina* – developed but not approved
- *Aythya nyroca* – not developed.

By the end of 1999 it is our plan to finalise 3 later planned and to prepare a technical publication for all 5 above species.

The BirdLife International structure of action plans has been used – reviews, geographical scope (with respect of both “orographic” units and territorial/administrative units of Slovakia), content, summary, introduction, background information (population distribution and size, life history, threats and limiting factors), aims and objectives, literature references.

Along with preparation of the action plans several measures for practical management were implemented during the specified period.

Otis tarda

Activities – research and monitoring of remaining population; protection of nesting sites including alternative use of agricultural land in these sites; support of population during “non-nesting” periods and public awareness.

Bodies involved – Slovak Environmental Agency - Centre for Nature and Landscape Protection, office in Bratislava; SOVS Vranov nad Topľou; the Pannonian Association for Protection of Great Bustard; local agricultural cooperatives, hunting association and border police.

Aquila heliaca

Activities – research and monitoring of nesting population, protection of nests and local management, reduction of treats of losses (mainly with respect to electrical wires 22 kV); public awareness.

Bodies involved – Group for Protection of Birds of Prey and Owls; Slovak Environmental Agency - Centre for Nature and Landscape Protection; SOVS, forestry bodies (state and private), local agriculture cooperatives.

Crex crex

Activities – research of nest distribution and population size, local management of pilot sites and public awareness developed but not approved.

Bodies involved – SOVS, Slovak Environmental Agency – Centre for Nature and Landscape Protection, local agricultural cooperatives.

Aquila pomarina

Activities – research on population distribution and size, site requirements.

Body involved – SOVS.

RECOMMENDATION 48/1996 (conservation of globally endangered species of Europe)

From these species the following ones have been **recorded and accepted** by the Fauna Commission of the Slovak Ornithological Society:

Numenius tenuirostris, *Pelecanus crispus*, *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*, *Oxyura leucocephala*, *Branta ruficollis*, *Anser erythropus* (water birds); *Aquila heliaca*, *Aegypius monachus*, *Falco naumanni*, *Otis tarda*, *Acrocephalus paludicola*, *Crex crex* („terrestrial“ birds).

The above species have also been **listed into the appendix of the Order** of the MoE on Protected Plants, Protected Animals... which will come into force since July 1st, 1999.

In 1998 the **Red List of Birds in Slovakia** was developed (Krištín et al, 1998) containing only nesting species. From species listed above they are *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* (NE), *Aquila heliaca* (EN), *Falco naumanni* (EX), *Otis tarda* (CR), *Acrocephalus paludicola* (DD), *Crex crex* (LR).

Slovakia is not the „area state“ for the following species *Numenius tenuirostris*, *Pelecanus crispus*, *Oxyura leucocephala*, *Anser erythropus*, *Aegypius monachus*, their occurrence is only occasional.

National action plans are (being) developed for *Aquila heliaca*, *Otis tarda* and *Crex crex*.

The list of IBAs (important birds areas) is being revised. According to the List made in 1989 for Czecho-Slovakia there were 18 IBAs in Slovakia, the new list consists of 32 sites (selected according to the new BirdLife criteria). The revision was made by the Society of the Birds Protection in Slovakia (national NGO - partner of BirdLife International).

Management projects to preserve the most endangered species *Aquila heliaca*, *Otis tarda* and *Crex crex* are annually included into the plans of nature protection expert organization (the Slovak Environmental Agency - Centre for Nature and Landscape Protection, the Administration of National Parks of the Slovak Republic). Several other institutions cooperate - university, museums, research institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, NGOs (SOV, SVODAS - Society for Protection and Survey of Birds of Prey and Owls). Each year surveillance is done for nesting species.

Attention is paid as well to the promotion and **public awareness**, for *Aquila heliaca* for example - recently a short film has been prepared as well as exhibition presenting importance of this species in ecosystem, dangers to its population and national project to save and promote existing population in Slovakia.

RECOMMENDATION 60/1997 (action plans for globally endangered species of Europe)

Aquila heliaca is the only listed species of above recommendation relevant for Slovakia. The mortality caused by electrocution by power line (22kW) has been reduced by using plastic „combs“ to the pylons both the new and reconstructed. This technical measure prevents sitting birds to the most dangerous pylons. Possibilities of using the new model of pylons have already been discussed with the Slovak Energetic Company. Their are called „FALKO“ and are comparable to the Czech model „PAŮÁT“.

Apart for this very important measure several activities for *Aquila heliaca* are promo-ted for research and monitoring of nesting population, preservation of individuals nests and other „local measures“.

RECOMMENDATION 61/1997 (*Oxyura leucocephala*)

Oxyura leucocephala is a „non-nesting“ species in Slovakia, occurring only occasionally, *Oxyura jamaicensis* has not been recorded in Slovakia. According to our current national legislation introduction is allowed only on the basis of a priori approval of a nature protection body. The new order (mention above) will enable eradication of spe-cies endangering natural ecosystems. Similar measures need to be incorporated into the new law on hunting and following orders.

RECOMMENDATION 62/1997 is not relevant for Slovakia

SWITZERLAND / SUISSE

TURQUIE / TURKEY

UKRAINE

In 1997-1998 following activities were done in Ukraine in the framework of Bird Action Plans:

National Action Plans:

Workshop on globally threatened bird species was held in Kiev, 8-10 March 1998 where 38 participants representing UTOP (Ukrainian Union for Bird Protection), Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine (MEPNSU), protected areas and other agencies had discussed current status and conservation of the birds in Ukraine. National Action Plans for 17 globally threatened species have been drafted and national working groups for these species were established.

Survey and monitoring

- Biennial field survey of the Aquatic Warbler was finished, number of the breeding population was estimated, key breeding sites and threats were identified;
- One-year field survey of the Imperial Eagle was conducted covering half of Ukraine territory, breeding populations were estimated, and key sites and threats identified;
- One year winter field survey of the Great Bustard was implemented, state of wintering populations was estimated, key sites and threats were identified.

Legal species protection, including hunting control

Regulation on Hunting was amended to meet provisions of the Bern Convention. A Law of Ukraine "On Accession of Ukraine to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals" was adopted by Verchovna Rada of Ukraine on 19 March 1999.

IBA work

102 IBAs were identified during field survey in 1995-1997 of total square 24970 sq. km covering 4 % of the territory of Ukraine. These sites are proposed to be included in European IBA Book. During field survey in 1998 more than 20 new IBAs were identified.

Public awareness/educational activity including issuing of promotional materials

UTOP issued several papers concerning mitigation of indirect hunting pressure on threatened species and elaborated relevant recommendations. MEPNSU translated and issued Bern and Bonn conventions in Ukrainian to get various ministries and agencies, wide public acquainted with these international instruments for the conservation of animals and birds in particular.

Other publicity materials include:

- black and white IBA newsletter (three issues per year, 300 copies);
- black and white regional reports ("Birds of Sumy region" - 200 copies, "Slender-billed Curlew in Ukraine and Russia" - 150 copies;
- black and white leaflet "Great Bustard conservation in Ukraine" – 5000 copies.

Funding:

Activities were supported by:

- Vogelbescherming Nederland;
- MATRA Funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands;

- Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, Directorate for Nature Management through the PIN/MATRA Funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands.
 - Office of the Agricultural Counsellor of the Embassy of The Netherlands, Kyiv;
 - Ecoagrofirm "Fauna", Ukraine
 - UTOP (Ukrainian Union for Bird Conservation)
- Arrangement of surveys, publications, seminars and meetings were promoted by a lot of local experts, scientists and organizations.

Recommendations:

Initiate preparation of the multinational Memorandum of Co-operation for Great Bustard, Lesser White-fronted Goose and Red-breasted Goose conservation involving Ukraine, Russia and other countries concerned.

APPENDIX 4



Action implemented by the BirdLife International Partnership on species for which an Action Plan has been published

For each species the following information is given:

Countries named in the Species Action Plans

BirdLife International Partners that have been working on the species in the last few years (included also if no specific information available)

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997) as in the report of the Workshop held in Turkey on 4 May 1997 Note that not all of the 23 species were included.

or

Priority Actions identified in the Action Plans (for those species that were not discussed at the Izmir meeting)

Actions implemented List of all known recent action (i.e. after the Izmir workshop) undertaken by Partners or in which Partners have been involved in.

The paper lists only activities specifically addressed on species and reflecting the priority activities identified in the SAPs. This list is not to be considered complete, but gives an overview of the main activities carried out by the BirdLife Partners.

Many BirdLife Partners are also working on IBAs and on the declaration of IBA as protected areas thus positively affecting many species listed below. Many BirdLife International Partners are implementing as well habitat management of sites or are lobbying on agricultural, hunting or land-use planning issues that will result in habitat amelioration for many species. This has not been included in this paper.

Fea's Petrel

1 E

SAP published 1996

Countries: Madeira, Azores (Portugal)

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Provide artificial burrows for breeding, Evaluate the efficiency of control programmes, Research, Search other potential breeding sites

Actions implemented

- RSPB funded an expedition to Cape Verde to survey Fea's Petrels ;
- Monitoring by Parque Natural da Madeira and Freira Conservation Project (Frank Zino)

Zino's Petrel

1 E

SAP published 1996

Countries: Madeira (Portugal)

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

LIFE project proposal, Search for unknown breeding sites, Increase on the field actions, Education programme, Increase predator control.

Actions implemented

- RSPB is financially supporting the Freira Conservation Team (Frank Zino) to implement the action plan (reduction of cats and rats, warding of breeding sites, survey, monitoring)
- RSPB funded an International Zino's Petrel Workshop in Madeira in December 1998.

Pygmy Cormorant**2 V****SAP published 1996**

Countries: Albania, Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and (Italy not included in the SAP, but now the species is regularly breeding).

BirdLife International Partners: HOS, BSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Increase law enforcement (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Turkey), Set-aside / compensation scheme for fish ponds (Bulgaria and Hungary), Monitor Great Cormorant culling where PC is also present (Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary and Slovakia), Education and awareness programmes for fishermen, Inputs in the Great Cormorant management plans developed under Bonn Convention

Actions implemented

- HOS, is running a LIFE project with WWF. The project covers 10 sites. Actions include habitat management and creation of new feeding sites (pools) along Axrios river) and monitoring. The final aims are the protection of Lake Kerkini and lake Vistonis.
- Bulgarian National Action Plan for the species has been drafted by BSPB and will be endorsed by the national government in September
- BSPB carried out a research on the ecology of the species
- BSPB is monitoring and running surveys the species, in contact with HOS
- BSPB produced a manual for fish farmers

Dalmatian Pelican**1 V****SAP published 1996**

Countries: Albania, Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine

BirdLife International Partners HOS, ROS, BSPB, MME, DHKD

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

LIFE project (Greece) and similar activities (EU funded) in neighbouring countries, Lake Kerkini campaign, Protection of Black Sea wetlands (Ukraine, Russia), Law enforcement (Greece, Turkey), Immediate action to stop disturbance at breeding sites, Implementation of 2nd Phase of PHARE project at Karavasta lagoon (Albania), Building of nest platform at Srebarna Reserve (Bulgaria), Establishment of a Regional Working Group.

Actions implemented

- (HOS) Since 1985 colonies at Prespa Lake have been monitored by the Prespa Protection Society and at Amvrakikos Lake by HOS. Monitoring and research involves also Mr. Crivelli. The breeding population is increasing.
- BirdLife International (with Dutch funds) has produced a Poster on Endangered Species (incl. DP) in Greece, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian in preparation.
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species
- BSPB is monitoring the breeding, migrating and wintering population of the species.

Lesser White Fronted Goose**1 V****SAP published 1996**

Countries: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine.

BirdLife International Partners: NOF, HOS, BSPB, UTOP, MME, RBCU

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Forge closer link with Working Group, Research on breeding areas in Tamyra (Russia), Continue satellite tracking (Norway, Finland), Improve control on hunting (Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Germany, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria and Kazakhstan), Surveys at stopover and wintering sites (Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan), Include the species in the RDB (Ukraine)

Actions implemented

- BSPB Surveys in February 1998 (with NOF) and monitoring ongoing
- BSPB and NOF, ROS, UTOP, MME, RBCU Poster and stickers funded by BirdLife International
- NOF Satellite tracking, colour ringing, surveys also in Russia
- HOS is monitoring the species in three sites within the Pygmy Cormorant LIFE projects.

Red Breasted Goose

1 L

SAP published 1996

Countries: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

BirdLife International Partners: ROS, HOS, BSPB, MME, RSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Implementation of management plans, Establish a biodiversity Centre (Bulgaria), Law enforcement on hunting (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Greece and Russia), Environmental friendly farming schemes (Romania, Bulgaria), Identification of key staging areas (Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan)

Actions implemented

- RSPB is funding PhD on wintering ecology of Red-breasted Goose in Romania, carried out by Dan Hulea at the University of East Anglia, UK
- ROS is running a Pilot study on the Biology and Distribution of the Red-breasted Goose in Romania (winter 1996/1997)
- ROS produced leaflets on the species
- Co-ordinated conservation actions, including Surveys and monitoring of wintering and migratory birds by BSPB, ROS and Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Project
- (HOS) No specific actions taken, but the species will benefit from the LIFE project since it is using the same areas as LWfG
- BirdLife International (Dutch funds) has produced a Poster on Endangered Species (incl. RBG) in Greece, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian in preparation.
- BSPB carried out a research on feeding ecology of the species.

Marbled Teal

1 E

SAP published 1996

Countries: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Russia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

BirdLife International Partners: SEO, DHKD

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Permanent hunting ban at key sites (Spain, Azerbaijan), Satellite tracking experiment (Spain, Turkey), More LIFE projects (Spain), Research (Spain, Turkey), Improve monitoring and surveys (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Turkey), Preparation and endorsement by local authorities of regional recovery plans (Spain), Designation of all key site as protected areas or SPAs (Azerbaijan, Russia, Spain, Turkey), Designation of Akyatan as Ramsar Site (Turkey), Modify canals at El Hondo (Spain)

Actions implemented

- (actions by SEO) at El Hondo
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species

White-headed Duck**1 E****SAP published 1996**

Countries: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Israel, Romania, Russia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine – All EU country (Ruddy duck)

BirdLife International Partners: RSPB, BSPB, LPO, LIPU, ROS, RBCU, SEO, DHKD, HOS, MME

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Urgently start culling of Ruddy duck (UK, France, Germany, Netherlands), Improve protection and management of Budur Gölü (Turkey), Monitoring and research at Lake Vistonis (Greece), Stop construction of dyke at eastern part of Lake Vistonis (Greece), National surveys (Albania, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Russia, Ukraine), No reintroduction Programmes (all), Extend boundaries of Budur Ramsar site (Turkey), Fast circulation of midwinter waterbird counts to national focal point (Wetland International, WWT), Set up Working Group (East – West), Satellite tracking (Turkey)

Actions implemented

- RSPB/BirdLife International produced lobbying video in Bulgarian, English, French, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.
- lobbying in the UK and on European level to solve Ruddy Duck problem;
- HOS run a small project has been funded by VBNL for monitoring and a workshop (attended also by Andy Green). HOS, WWF and RSPB sent a complaint letter to the EU for the conservation of lake Vistonis.
- BirdLife International (Dutch funds) has produced a Poster on Endangered Species (incl. WHD) in Greece, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian in preparation.
- LIPU has a breeding centre and is working on management of two former breeding sites. Reintroduction scheme postponed, but will organise a workshop on WhD
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species and produced a poster on the species.
- Budur Gölü (Turkey) Ramsar site boundaries enlarged
- Swiss Authorities are considering to start control a program on ruddy duck and hybrids.
- BSPB is monitoring the wintering and migrating birds

Cinereous Vulture**3 V****SAP published 1996**

Countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, FYR of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine

BirdLife International Partners: SEO, LIPU, RSPB, LPO, DHKD, BSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Development of new forestry policies and legislation (Greece, Spain, Turkey), Review and enforce national legislation on shooting, disturbance and poisoning (Spain), Development of LIFE Projects (Spain), Prevent Use of toxic chemicals for predator control (Spain, turkey), Intensive survey and conservation project (Russia, Ukraine), Education on use of toxic chemicals for poisoning (Greece, Spain, Turkey)

Actions implemented

- SEO large anti-poisoning campaign including a workshop
- LIPU involved in a anti poisoning campaign within a LIFE project (by BVCF)
- LIFE project run by LPO/FIR for the reintroduction of the species in central France
- BSPB, monitoring(in co-ordination with HOS) and feeding station
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species
- Bulgarian National Action Plan for the species has been drafted by BSPB and will be endorsed by the national government in September
- BSPB carried out a research on the ecology of the species

Imperial Eagle

1 E

SAP published 1996

Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Macedonia, Ukraine.

BirdLife International Partners: MME, HOS DHKD, BSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

More surveys (Russia, Ukraine, Caucasian states and central Asia), Law enforcement (Bulgaria, Greece, Ukraine, Russia), Prevent illegal trade (Slovakia, Russia, Kazakhstan), Protection of key IBAs (Russia, Ukraine), Expand Zemplén protected area (Hungary), Development of sensitive forestry policy (Hungary, Slovakia), Carry out EIAs on forest road construction plans in key areas for the species (All), Prevent disturbance to breeding sites (Albania, Greece), Public awareness campaign targeted at legal officers dealing with cases of illegal shooting of trafficking (All), Insulation of powerlines at key areas (Hungary, Slovakia), Temporary protection of nest sites (Bulgaria), Improve Working Group membership from (Ukraine and Russia)

Actions implemented

- There is a WG (co-ordinated by MME [Laszlo Haraszthy])
- International conference held in Budapest (MME).
- HOS A breeding pair was discovered in 1996 along the Albanian border. HOS undertook a survey, but no nest was found in 1997
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species
- BSPB carried out a research on the distribution and status and is monitoring the population
- RBCU carried out several surveys in Russia and western Kazakhstan in 1997 and 1998, doubling the known numbers of nests, costs covered by Vogelbescherming Nederland
- UTOP carried out a survey in the eastern part of Ukraine in 1997, with several new nests being identified; costs covered by Vogelbescherming Nederland

Spanish Imperial Eagle

1 E

SAP published 1996

Countries: Spain, (Portugal and Morocco)

BirdLife International Partners: SEO

Priority Actions identified in the SAP

Maintain an adequate area of protected habitat for the species, Identification, description and modification of power-lines and further research, Modify technical regulations concerning the installation of high voltage powerlines, Include in the network of protected areas all known nesting sites and draw up management plans for these, Produce Environmental Impact Assessment for any project which might affect the Spanish Imperial Eagle habitat, Strict application of hunting legislation, Where possible, temporal and spatial restriction on rabbit hunting, restrict quarrying and other activities near nests to reduce human disturbance, Increase rabbit population also by means of restocking, Return any Spanish Imperial Eagle chicks to the wild, Carry out annual surveys of the breeding population, Monitor tagged individuals, Monitor the use of poisoned baits and its impact on the species.

Actions implemented

Lesser Kestrel

1 (V)

SAP published 1996

Countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech rep., former Yugoslavia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and others outside Europe

BirdLife International Partners: SEO, LIPU, HOS, LPO, DHKD, BSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Law enforcement on nest site protection (Greece, Italy, Spain), International LIFE project for habitat conservation, public awareness and monitoring (Spain, France, Italy and Greece), Implementation of agri-environmental Regulation in main breeding areas (Spain, Italy, Greece), Surveys (Albania,

Bulgaria, Central Asia, Russia, Ukraine), Training ornithologist for field identification (Ukraine), Set up a Working Group (BirdLife International Secretariat or Italy)

Actions implemented

- HOS have been working intensively on this species mainly in the core area (NW of Thessaloniki) with RSPB funds. Nest boxes have been installed, educational activities carried out and a census (resulting in some 3,000 pairs).
- Last year has been decided to establish a network between the Partners, with Seo taking the lead, but no action implemented so far.
- LIPU monitoring the most important colonies, successful lobby work resulted in main feeding areas and some urban colonies to be declared SPAs
- BirdLife International as agreed with SEO, LIPU, HOS and LPO to establish a network through the exchange of info, updated data and material produced.
- SEO has a LIFE project on the species (Management of steppe habitat)
- LPO/FIR has a LIFE project, implementing the SAP
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species
- Bulgarian National Action Plan for the species has been drafted by BSPB and will be endorsed by the national government in September
- BSPB is monitoring the species

Corncrake

1 V

SAP published 1996

Countries: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Rep., Denmark, Estonia, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, former Yugoslavia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, UK

BirdLife International Partners: RSPB, BSPB, LOB, OTOP, ROS, RBCU, ČSO, SVS, LIPU, BirdLife Austria, LPO, SVS

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Introduction of environmental friendly management scheme (in Central Eastern European Countries), Habitat conservation management (all countries), Corncrake Research Group should be made more active (in CEECs), Lobby national governments on Phare Multi-country project (in CEECs)

Actions implemented

- RSPB is funding the Corncrake Conservation Team (since 1998) with more than 100 experts. There is a Website (www.lbv.de/crex)
- RSPB funded International Corncrake Workshop held in Hilpoltstein, Germany, in September 1998. Proceedings in preparation (printed and on home page); PR material in preparation; home page designed;
- RSPB funded national surveys in Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Russia;
- RSPB funded/is funding several studies on Habitat use of Corncrake in Russia;
- RSPB is funding several research projects in aviary (feeding, ageing, sexing of Corncrakes);
- RSPB is funding small projects on habitat use of Corncrake in Czech Republic and Slovenia;
- Corncrake Conservation Team is developing an European Corncrake Monitoring Programme as well as carrying out a study on age structure of Corncrake populations in many countries; several other small scale studies funded by RSPB;
- RSPB funded masters thesis on "Population Size, Habitat Selection and Population Trend of the Corncrake in the Biebrza Valley, Northeast Poland";
- RBNO has a LIFE projects on habitat management for the species
- LIPU leading a national working group.

- SVS carried a research on the species, produced and distributed leaflets and cards with practical instructions to farmers and Authorities and carried out an awareness campaign.
- BSPB is carrying out surveys and monitoring the species and produced a poster

Great bustard

1 D

SAP published 1996

Countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech rep., Germany, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, former Yugoslavia

BirdLife International Partners: MME, SEO, DHKD, BSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Legal protection of the species (Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal), Land-use policies and programmes favouring the species (all countries), Carry out intensive population surveys (Russia, Central Asia), Initiate conservation projects (Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine), More SPAs designation (Spain), EIAs on any development activities at key areas should take in consideration needs of the species (All countries), Set up a Working Group (BirdLife International to lead).

Actions implemented

- SEO has a LIFE projects o the species (Management of steppe habitat)
- MME Monitoring of the population, working with farmers to save nests, public awareness.
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species and produced a poster on the species.
- BSPB is monitoring the wintering population
- UTOP carried out a winter survey on Crimea, during which a wintering flock of several thousands was discovered; survey being funded by Vogelbescherming Nederland

Houbara Bustard

3 (E)

SAP published 1996

Countries: Canary Islands (Spain)

BirdLife International Partners:

Priority Actions identified in the SAP

Adopt as royal decree of an updated recovery plan, Enforce restrictions on vehicle use in key areas and launch a public awareness campaign, Prevent habitat loss, Purchase key areas, Continue research and monitoring, Provide adequate legal protection, Designate additional SPAs, Encourage management to benefit Houbaras under the EU agri-environmental regulation, Eradicate illegal hunting, Avoid the use of key Houbara areas for military manoeuvres, Increase wardening

Actions implemented

- Canary island authorities have produced a SAP.

Slender billed Curlew

1

SAP published 1996

Countries: Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Yugoslavia

Co-ordinating Partner: BirdLife International

BirdLife International Partners: HOS, BSPB, RBCU, UTOP

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Legal protection of the species (Albania, Kazakhstan, Italy, Russia, Spain, Ukraine), More field surveys (Russia), Continue testing satellite transmitters on Whimbrels (Greece, Italy), Further monitoring at key sites (Hungary, Italy, Ukraine, Russia), Set up a Working Group using Wader Study Group (BirdLife International to lead)

Actions implemented

- BirdLife European Division serving as secretariat of the WG (CMS). Database and reference list updated, identification of priority actions ongoing.
- HOS involved in a LIFE project (it's over) co-ordinating field works.
- Field surveys in Russia, Kazakhstan, BSPB is carrying censuses of the species in the IBAs

Partners Member of the WG: ASPBM, BirdLife Austria, BSPB, HOS, MME, LIPU, ROS, RBCU, SEO, DHKD, UTOP

Audouin's Gull

1 L

SAP published 1996

Countries: Algeria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia

BirdLife International Partners: LIPU, HOS, SEO, DHKD

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Review marine policies (all countries), Safeguard to colonies in E-Mediterranean (Greece, Turkey), Ban all refuse tips on island and surrounding mainland in the Aegean (Greece, Turkey), Set up a Working Group (Spain to lead?)

Actions implemented

- Audouin's Gull Conservation Team (chaired by LIPU)
- SEO monitoring the population in Ebro delta
- (HOS) LIFE funded research and monitoring in the Aegean: very successful (the known population raised from 60 to over 600 p.).
- HOS preparing a new LIFE application
- DHKD carried out surveys on the species

Madeira Laurel Pigeon

Columba trocaz

1 V

SAP published 1996

Countries: Madeira (Portugal)

BirdLife International Partners: SPEA

Priority Actions identified in the SAP

Establish a management plan for the Natural Park of Madeira, Seek funds from relevant international organisations, Prevent illegal killing of Madeira Laurel Pigeons, Promote the use of bird scarers to reduce agricultural damages, Prevent further habitat loss through livestock grazing or fires, Identify and protect new areas of laurel forest, Continue research and monitoring of the population, Undertake an education campaign to overcome the species unpopularity.

Actions implemented

- target species of SPEA, PR activities planned

Dark-tailed Pigeon

Columba bollii

1 V

SAP published 1996

Countries: Canary Islands (Spain)

BirdLife International Partners: SEO

Priority Actions identified at in the SAP

Avoid further damage to laurel forest for commercial forestry, Control illegal hunting, Carry out a full census and initiate a monitoring programme, Investigate factors affecting breeding performance, Ensure adequate legal protection of the species, Implement a programme of alternatives to commercial forestry, Promote restoration and expansion of laurel forest, Purchase important sites, Establish new hunting reserves, Undertake a public awareness campaign, Promote dialogue between different bodies, train wardens.

Actions implemented

- SEO has a LIFE project, management plan, eradication of predators, awareness campaign

White-tailed Laurel Pigeon

Columba junoniae 1 V

SAP published 1996

Countries: Canary Islands (Spain)

BirdLife International Partners: SEO

Priority Actions identified in the SAP

Avoid further damage to laurel forest for commercial forestry, Control illegal hunting, Carry out a full census and initiate a monitoring programme, Investigate factors affecting breeding performance, Ensure adequate legal protection of the species, Implement a programme of alternatives to commercial forestry, Promote restoration and expansion of laurel forest, Purchase important sites, Establish new hunting reserves, Undertake a public awareness campaign, Promote dialogue between different bodies, Train wardens.

Actions implemented

- SEO has a LIFE project, management plan, eradication of predators, awareness campaign

Aquatic warbler

1 E

SAP published 1996

Countries: Belarus, Belgium, (France), Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and UK

BirdLife International Partners: APB, OTOP, RSPB

Priority Actions identified at Izmir (Turkey, 1997)

Carry out ore surveys (Russia, Ukraine), Protection and management of threatened mires (Ukraine, Belarus), Introduction of low-intensity management regimes on floodplains (Poland, Belarus),

Actions implemented

- RSPB is funding the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (since 1998) chaired by Martin Flade;
- RSPB funded International Aquatic Warbler Workshop in Brdowin, Germany in March 1998; Proceedings and home page in preparation; extra issue of "Die Vogelwelt" in print;
- RSPB is co-funding surveys in Belarus carried out by APB;
- RSPB funded study on "Distribution, Number and Habitat Selection of Aquatic Warbler in Poland" (carried out by OTOP);
- Study on breeding biology, feeding, habitat selection, monitoring supervised by RSPB;
- RSPB is implementing and co-funding Darwin Project "Management Planning for Conservation of Fen Mire Biodiversity in Belarus"; target species: Aquatic Warbler;
- Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team is developing European Aquatic Warbler Monitoring Programme;
- All potential sites in Ukraine have been surveyed by UTOP in 1997 and 1998, surveys being paid by Vogelbescherming Nederland, bringing the total from 1-10 up to about 4000 signing males.
- RBCU carried out a survey in 1998 in western Russia, without sites being identified, costs paid by Vogelbescherming Nederland

Blue Chaffinch

1 V

SAP published 1996

Fringilla teydea

Countries: Canary Islands (Spain)

BirdLife International Partners

Priority Actions identified in the SAP

Include the Blue Chaffinch in CITES, Ensure adequate protection under the new Countryside Law and Wildlife Protection Law, Complete the national Endangered Species List, Eradicate illegal trade, Undertake habitat restoration, Prevent forest fires, Continue the current monitoring programme, Continue / expand the current research programme, Draw up official Action Plan.

Azore Bullfinch

Not included in BiE

SAP published 1996²

BirdLife International Partners

Priority Actions identified in the SAP

Control the expansion of exotic flora, Protect and increase the population of the key food plants, Promote the regeneration of laurel forest, Provide supplementary feeding, Continue population monitoring.

Actions implemented

Umberto Gallo-Orsi

Wageningen, 12 May 1999

APPENDIX 5



New Species Action Plans developed by BirdLife International

*Szabolcs Nagy
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INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of conservation community is to prevent extinctions. For species threatened across their range, limited or local actions are unlikely to be sufficiently strong or coherent to prevent extinctions. It is therefore necessary to define in some detail specific actions, which are required to prevent further deterioration in their status, and where appropriate, to begin recovery.

The first set of action plans for 23 globally threatened birds were prepared by BirdLife International and supported by the DG-XI of the European Union. They were endorsed by the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and published by the European Council¹.

SUMMARY OF THE ACTION PLANS

In 1996 the EU DG-XI has provided financial support for BirdLife International to develop action plans for 8 species, which are globally threatened and/or regarded as priority species within the EU (Table 1). The drafts for these 8 additional plans, that are all EU Birds Directive Annex-I species, were sent to the EU at the end of 1997 for endorsement or suggestions for amendments. So far the EU did not reply, so we are speaking about real drafts here today.

The process of development and the structure of these action plans were the same as in the case of the former 23 ones.

Each action plan was based on the inputs from a workshop with participation of experts from the European range states and 2-3 drafts were circulated to a wide audience of the research and conservation community (Table 2).

Each plan consists of three main sections. Part 1 deals with background information about status, ecology, threats and current conservation measures.

¹ Heredia, B., Rose, L. and Painter, M. (1996) *Globally threatened birds in Europe: action plans*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Table 3 provides a brief overview about the threats affecting the eight species. It is important to note that food shortage and degradation or loss of their habitat, sometimes throughout their life cycle threatens almost all species.

Persecution, illegal shooting and poaching have also some effect on the majority of the species concerned along with other form of human disturbance. These raise the question of the need of legislation and law enforcement in most of the range states.

It is also worth to point out the alarmingly huge gaps in our knowledge about the location of key sites and about the population ecology and limiting factor in case of most of these threatened species.

Part 2 includes the aims and generic objectives of the plan. The objectives are grouped under the following headings:

- policy and legislation;
- species and habitat protection;
- monitoring and research;
- public awareness.

Each objective is broken down into a series of actions followed by a brief description. These actions are generic and do not make reference to any particular country or geographical region except special cases. Each action is given a priority rating and a time-scale in which it ought to be carried out.

Table 4 provides a broad overview of recommended conservation action for all the eight species. They are mostly covered by species conservation legislation in most of the range states, however protection and appropriate management of the key sites deserve particular attention. Regarding the fairly disperse character of these species better integration of their ecological requirements into other policy sectors both on national and international level is also necessary.

Better monitoring and further ecological researches of these species are also needed to get more information about the key areas, better understanding of their population dynamics, limiting factors and habitat requirements, but also to measure the effectiveness of conservation efforts.

DEVELOPMENT FURTHER PLANS

In 1998 The DGXI agreed to co-fund the preparation of management documents (partly Action Plans partly Management Statements) for most of the remaining 16 species included in the list of the priority birds according to the ORNIS Committee. By the end of July the first draft documents will be sent to the DGXI while the final draft will be produced by the end of the year (Table 5).

For ten of these species Action Plans will be produced - with the same structure as the previous 31 - and for the remaining 6 only Management Plans that will deal with some of the subspecies included in the Annex 1. These will be short documents, 3-5 pages, largely ignoring details of ecology and biology included in the comprehensive Action Plans but identifying and ranking threats and conservation actions needed.

Table 1 – Conservation status of the concerned species

Species	SPEC	European Threats Status	Birds Directive	Bern Convention	Bonn Convention
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	3	(V)	I	II	II
<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	1	V	I	III	II
<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	1	L ^w		II	II
<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	3	E	I	II	II
<i>Aquila clanga</i>	1	E	I	II	II
<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	3	R	I	II	II
<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	3	E	I	II	II
<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	2	V	I	II	

Table 2 – Key information on the eight draft action plans

Species	Compiler	Date & venue of the workshop	Part.
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	P. Newbery, N. Schaffer, K. Smith (RSPB)	16-18 April 1996 Hippolstein, Bavaria	20
<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	D. Callaghan (WWT)	3-13 October 1996 Szerencs, Hungary	34
<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	Stephan Pihl (Wetlands Int. Seaduck SG)	1-4 November 1996 Kurassaare, Estonia	23
<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	R. & B. Heredia (MoE, Spain)	12-15 December 1996 Anso, Spain	30
<i>Aquila clanga</i>	B. Meyburg (WWGBP), L. Haraszhy (MME), M. Strazds (LOB), N. Schaffer (RSPB)	14-18 November 1996 Kemer, Latvia	25
<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	B. Meyburg (WWGBP), L. Haraszhy (MME), M. Strazds (LOB), N. Schaffer (RSPB)	14-18 November 1996 Kemer, Latvia	37
<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	B. Arroyo, E. Ferreira	3-12 January 1997	27
<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	E. de Juana, C. Martinez	24-26 January 1997	18

Table 3 – Threats identified in Species Action Plans

	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>
Food availability	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Climatic factors	✓	✓						
Non-native species		✓						
Predation			✓					✓
Interspecific competition							✓	
Degradation/loss of habitats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Excessive water abstraction	✓							
Construction								✓
Electrocution				✓			✓	✓
Fishing			✓					
Entrapment in fish nets		✓						
Poisoning/pollution	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Hunting/illegal shooting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disturbance	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

Table 4 – Proposed conservation actions

	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>
Policy integration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legal protection for the species		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
National recovery plan	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Protection of key sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Appr. Management of key sites	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Prevent intr. non-native species		✓						
Prevent poisoning					✓			
Supplementary feeding				✓				
Provide artificial nests						✓		
Prevent electrocution	✓					✓	✓	
Guarding on sensitive sites	✓			✓		✓	✓	
Reintroduction		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Restoration of prey populations				✓			✓	
Monitoring of populations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Develop census techniques	✓	✓						✓
Locate key areas		✓	✓				✓	✓
Carry out ecological researches	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Investigate soc.-econ. factors	✓							✓
Education & public awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5 – Species Action Plan Update 3 May 1999

Species	BirdLife Partner	1 st draft document	Workshop
<i>Sterna dougalli</i> (Action Plan)	RSPB	Yes	Miami, Florida (USA), 22-24 October 1998
<i>Loxia scotica</i> (AP)	RSPB	Yes	
<i>Falco biarmicus</i> (AP)	LIPU	By end of July	Italy, May or June
<i>Accipiter gentilis arrigonii</i> (Management Statement)	LIPU	By end of July	No workshop
<i>Alectoris graeca whitakeri</i> (MS)	LIPU	By end of July	No workshop
<i>Perdix perdix italica</i> (MS)	LIPU	By end of July	No workshop
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii</i> (AP)	SEO	By end of July	Mallorca (Spain), September
<i>Puffinus yelkouan mauretanicus</i> (AP)	SEO	By end of July	Mallorca (Spain), first week of September
<i>Fulica cristata</i> (AP)	SEO	By end of July	Valencia (Spain), before the end of July
<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i> (AP)	SEO	By end of July	Valencia (Spain), before the end of July
<i>Cursorius cursor</i> (AP)	SEO	By end of July	Canaries (Spain), before the end of July
<i>Accipiter gentilis grantii</i> (MS)	SEO	By end of July	Canaries (Spain), before the end of July
<i>Dendrocopos major canariensis</i> (MS)	SEO	By end of July	Canaries (Spain), before the end of July
<i>Dendrocopos major tanneri</i> (MS)	SEO	By end of July	Canaries (Spain), before the end of July
<i>Falco rusticolus</i> (AP)	BirdLife Finland	By the end of July	Kilpisjärvi (Finland), 6-7 March 1999
<i>Falco eleonora</i> (AP)	HOS	By the end of July	Aegina Island (Greece), 27-29 March

APPENDIX 6

Recommendation

on the implementation of new action plans for globally threatened birds in Europe

- Draft -

Draft Recommendation No. ... of the Standing Committee, adopted on ... 1999 on the implementation of new action plans for globally threatened birds in Europe

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention;

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild fauna and its natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Recalling their Recommendations No. 48 (1996) on the conservation of European globally threatened birds, No. 60 (1997) on the implementation of the actions plans for globally threatened birds in Europe, No. 61 (1997) on the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), No. 62 (1997) on the conservation of regionally threatened birds in the Macaronesian and Mediterranean regions;

Noting that a considerable number of bird species of Europe have suffered a decreased in their numbers, a reduction in their geographical distribution or have critically endangered populations;

Aware that the design and implementation of Recovery Plans may be a useful tool to redress the situation of European globally threatened birds and recalling in this context Recommendation No. 59 (1997) on the drafting and implementation of actions plans of wild fauna species;

Desirous to increase co-ordination in the implementation of the Bern Convention and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement under the Bonn Convention;

Referring to the Action Plans on European globally threatened birds presented by BirdLife International;

Desirous to take prompt action for the conservation of Europe's most threatened birds;

Recommends that Contracting Parties and observer states to the Convention:

- carry out (or, if appropriate, reinforce) National Action Plans for the species listed in the Appendix to the recommendation.

Appendix to Recommendation No. ...

Aythya nyroca

Polysticta stelleri

Aquila clanga

Aquila pomarina

APPENDIX 7

The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement: a must for concerted actions

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history migrating animals has been a universal phenomenon. Many animals migrate in response to biological requirements, such as the need to find suitable location for breeding and raising their young, and to be in favourable areas for feeding. The most well known group of species that migrate are birds. In the region Eurasia-Africa the West Palearctic Flyway is used by million of waterbirds. During this migration these animals cross political boundaries between nations: boundaries that have no inherent meaning for waterbirds, but which have a dramatic influence on their annual life cycle due to great differences that exist between countries among other things, in conservation policy. Furthermore they are dependent on the specific sites they find at the end of their journey and along the flyway. Increasingly the breeding, staging or wintering sites are threatened by man-made disturbances and habitat degradation. Also they may fall victim to adverse natural phenomena such as unfavourable climatic conditions e.g. drought or extended periods of snowfall and frost.

When it was recognised, in the early eighties, that there is a need to have a legal instrument for concerted conservation action especially for migratory waterbird the preparation of the African-Eurasian Waterbird started. After nearly ten years of drafting and negotiation the Final Negotiation Meeting to adopt the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) was held from 12-16 June 1995 in the Hague (The Netherlands). During this meeting the Agreement was adopted by consensus.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AEWA

1979 In 1979 the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979) was concluded in Bonn (Germany) and came into force in 1983. The goal of this Convention, commonly referred to the Bonn Convention, is to provide conservation for migratory terrestrial, marine and avian species over the whole of their range. The fundamental principle of this Convention is that Parties acknowledge the importance of migratory species being conserved and that they agreed to take action to this end and in particular the Parties:

- shall endeavour to provide immediate protection for migratory species which are included in Appendix I. Appendix I list migratory species which are endangered.
- shall endeavour to conclude Agreements for migratory species included in Appendix II. Appendix II list migratory species which have an unfavourable conservation status and which require international agreements for their conservation and management. as well as those which have a conservation status which would significantly benefit from the international co-operation that could be achieved by an international agreement.

The latter is the basis for drafting the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. Agreements are the primary tools for the implementation of the main goal of the Bonn Convention, but at the same time they are more specific than the Convention itself, involved more deliberately the Range States of the species to be conserved and are easier to put into practice than the whole Bonn Convention.

- 1994** After the first Conference of the Parties of the Bonn Convention in 1985 , where it was decided to prepare an Agreement for the Western Palearctic Anatidae, the Dutch Government began developing a draft Western Palearctic Waterfowl Agreement as part of its Western Palearctic Flyway conservation programme.

The first consultative meeting of Range States of AEWA was held in Nairobi in June 1994. The meeting strongly supported the concluding of AEWA, and consensus could be achieved on almost all matters of substance.

- 1995** In June 1995 the final negotiation meeting was held in The Hague. At this meeting sixty-four Range States and the European Union were represented. Several Inter Governmental and Non Governmental Organisations attended the negotiation meeting as observers. The Meeting adopted by consensus the Agreement and accepted with appreciation the offer of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to act as Depositary and to provide, at its own expense for the first three years from the date on which the Agreement is opened for signature, an Interim Secretariat and to host the first session of the Meeting of the Parties following entry into force of the Agreement.

- 1996** The Dutch Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, Department of Nature Management, Division of International Nature Management established per 1 January 1996 the Interim Secretariat. A full time secretary was appointed.

On 15 August 1996 AEWA has been opened for signature at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands at The Hague.

2. THE AGREEMENT

AIM OF THE AGREEMENT

The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement is the first regional Agreement of a vast area of 60 million square kilometres (see Fig 1). It covers the entire continent of Africa and Europe, as well as parts of Asia and a few Arctic islands of Northeastern Canada encompassing 116 Range States.

As mentioned in the introduction migratory waterbirds need a kind of legal instrument to maintain them in a favourable conservation status. The aim of AEWA therefore is to create a legal basis for concerted conservation and management policy by the Range States for migratory waterbird species. In total 170 species of waterbird are covered by AEWA.

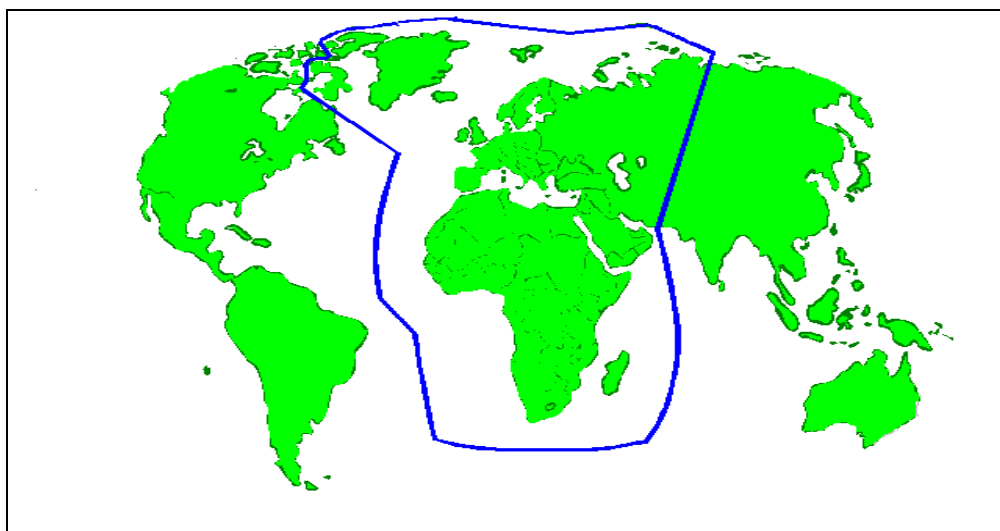


Fig 1: Map of the Agreement Area

STRUCTURE OF THE AGREEMENT

The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement has two parts, both of which are legally binding:

- Firstly the Agreement text.
- Secondly an Action Plan (at present restricted to geese, swans, ducks, spoonbills and storks).

Agreement text

The Agreement text describes the philosophy, legal framework and provisions. In this part also the two Fundamental Principles are mentioned namely:

1. Parties shall take co-ordinated measures to maintain migratory waterbird species in a favourable conservation status or to restore them to such a status;
2. In implementing the measures of paragraph 1, Parties should take into account the precautionary principle.

Based on the Fundamental Principles Parties shall take General Conservation Measures. These measures include that Parties shall take measure to conserve migratory waterbirds giving special attention to endangered species as well as to those with an unfavourable conservation status. Besides General Conservation Measures Parties shall undertake special action as mentioned in the Action Plan.

Action Plan

The second Part of the Agreement is the Action Plan. This Action Plan specifies actions which Parties shall undertake in relation to priority species and issues, under the following headings, consistent with the general conservation measures:

- a) species conservation;
- b) habitat conservation;
- c) management of human activities;
- d) research and monitoring;
- e) education and information; and
- f) implementation.

ad (a). *Species conservation*

The first group of actions is directed towards the conservation of species. It provides for legislation and law enforcement measures to be undertaken by Parties, development of programmes for emergency situation, both natural and caused by human activities, and the development of International Species Conservation Plans for all threatened and vulnerable species of populations of waterbirds.

ad (b). *Habitat conservation*

The second group of activities concerns the conservation of habitats and important sites. Parties shall endeavour to continue establishing protected areas and shall give special protection to wetlands of international importance. Furthermore they will endeavour to make wise and sustainable use of all wetland, to avoid degradation or to restore or rehabilitate areas that are important to populations.

ad (c) *Management of human activities*

The third group of activities is the management of human activities. One of the human activities is hunting. Parties shall cooperate to ensure that their hunting legislation implements the principle of sustainable use. In order to assess the annual harvest of populations

Parties shall cooperate with a view to developing a reliable and harmonised system for the collection of harvest data.

Eco-tourism is another kind of human activity that may affect waterbird populations. Therefore Parties shall encourage eco-tourism, where appropriate, but not in core zones or protected areas.

ad (d)/ *Research, monitoring, education, information and implementation*

(e)/ Besides the above mentioned groups of activities research and monitoring is very important.

(f) Scientific research and monitoring of the migratory waterbird population can reveal population trends, point out priorities for protection activities and discover the reasons for unfavourable developments.

Education and information is also a must. Without this kind of activities there will not be public awareness of the importance of conservation of migratory birds. In the long run this will negatively influence the acceptance of all the activities mentioned in the AEWA.

The Action Plan shall be reviewed at each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties. It is foreseen that the AEWA will enter into force during 1999. Thus, the first Meeting of the Parties will take place from 6-9 November at Cape Town, South Africa.

CONCLUSION

Because Migrating Waterbirds Know no Boundaries for the conservation of these species there is a need for an international approach on Flyway level. The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement is an international legal instrument that could be used as a tool for concerted actions(e.g. research and monitoring programmes). Actions that in the long run will contribute to maintain or restore migratory waterbird species in a favourable conservation status.

APPENDIX 8

Recommendation

of the Group of Experts on Conservation of Birds
to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention

The Group of Experts on Conservation of Birds held its 2nd meeting in Strasbourg on 18-19 May 1999. On this occasion, the Group decided to address a recommendation to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on initiatives to be taken by Contracting Parties for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Group invites the Contracting Parties and observer states to the Convention:

- to sign and ratify the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention);
- to take into consideration the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and the relevant work carried out by BirdLife International, in the setting up of the Emerald Network;
- to consider the importance of establishing a European Bird Monitoring System as a basis for biodiversity indicators of sustainability, as proposed by BirdLife International.

APPENDIX 9

**Designation of Important Bird Areas for Natura 2000 SPAs
and for Emerald Network
as contribution to the implementation of the Species Action Plans**

*Szabolcs Nagy
BirdLife International*

BACKGROUND

Some sites are exceptionally important for maintaining the taxa dependent upon the habitats and ecosystems in which they occur. Many species may be effectively saved by protection of the most important sites. This fact is recognised by several international conventions (e.g. Ramsar, Bern EMERALD Network) and also by the Natura 2000 initiative of the European Union.

The Important Bird Area Programme of BirdLife International was launched to identify areas, which hold internationally significant populations of one or more threatened or congregatory species.

Taken together, they form a coherent network throughout the species biogeographic distributions. The IBA network may be considered as a minimum essential to ensure the survival of these species across their ranges. These sites may include the best examples of the species' natural habitat, or sites with distinctively high numbers/densities. The consequence of the loss of any one of them may be disproportionately large.

However the IBA criteria recognise, that not all species may be protected through a site-based approach. Therefore, it needs to be combined with conservation measures in the wider environment.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

The first European wide IBA inventory was completed in 1989 and published in "*Important Bird Areas in Europe*" (Grimmet & Jones 1989), which listed over 2,400 sites. The European IBA Review Project was launched as part of a Global IBA Programme on the BirdLife XXIVth World Conference in Rosenheim in 1994. New criteria were developed (Anon. 1995) to ensure coherence of criteria throughout the world and incorporate bird conservation priorities identified in:

- *Birds to Watch 2* (Collar et al. 1994) – globally threatened and Species of Global Conservation Concern;
- *Birds in Europe* (Tucker & Heath 1994) – Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC), and
- *Waterfowl Population Estimates* (Rose & Scott 1994) – thresholds for waterbirds.

The IBA site selection criteria recognise three level of international significance:

- global – Category A;
- regional – Category B;
- sub-regional – Category C.

Category A criteria

The aim of this category is to identify sites with global importance for any one or a group of species. It includes four major subcategories:

Category A1 – globally threatened species;
Category A2 – restricted range species;
Category A3 – biome-restricted assemblages;
Category A4 – congregations.

Category A1

This is the most relevant category for the implementation of action plans in *Globally Threatened Birds in Europe* (Heredia et al. 1996).

The criterion for site selection: “the site regularly holds significant numbers of globally threatened species, or other species of global conservation concern.”

This category refers to species globally threatened with extinction, Conservation Dependent or Data Deficient according to the new IUCN criteria for threatened status. All such species are listed in *Birds to Watch 2* (Collar et al. 1994).

Population size thresholds for site selection are agreed regionally on species by species basis to take into account relevant features of the ecology of each and the reason(s) for decline.

In Europe this criterion is used to select sites for Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC) category 1 and all Near-Threatened species regularly occurring in Europe. It is 35 species in total.

Category A2

This category is devoted to restricted-range species whose breeding distributions define an Endemic Bird Area or a Secondary Area. There are 15 restricted-range species, i.e. with world distribution of less than 50.000 km², in Europe. Almost all of these species fall into SPEC categories and can identify IBAs under other criteria.

Category A3

This category is devoted to biome-restricted species assemblages, i.e. whose distributions largely or wholly confined to one biome. In Europe the site qualifies if it holds a significant component of the group of species whose breeding distribution are largely or wholly confined to one biome.

Category A4

This category applies to those species that are vulnerable by congregation at vulnerable or sensitive sites when breeding or wintering or while on passage. Selection of globally important sites for congregations is based on four criteria. A site may qualify on any of the four criteria listed below:

- i. if it holds, on a regular basis, at least 1% of a biogeographic population of a congregatory waterbird species;
- ii. if it holds, on a regular basis, at least 1% of the global population of a congregatory seabird or terrestrial species;
- iii. if it holds, on a regular basis, at least 20,000 waterbirds or 10,000 pairs of seabirds of one or more species;
- iv. if it exceeds the thresholds set for migratory species at bottleneck areas. In Europe it is set at the level of 20,000 storks, raptors or cranes.

Category B

The aim of this category is to identify sites with regional (e.g. European) importance for any one or a group of species. It includes three major subcategories:

- Category B1 – congregations with regional importance;
- Category B2 – species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe;
- Category B3 – species with favourable conservation status in Europe, but concentrated in Europe.

Category B1

This category is more or less the regional equivalent of Category A4. A site may qualify on any of the four criteria listed below:

- i. if it holds, on a regular basis, at least 1% of a flyway or other distinct population of a congregatory waterbird species;
- ii. if it holds, on a regular basis, at least 1% of a distinct population of a seabird;
- iii. if it holds, on a regular basis, at least 1% of a distinct population of other congregatory species;
- iv. if it exceeds the thresholds set for migratory species at bottleneck areas. In Europe it is set at the level of over 5,000 storks or over 3,000 raptors or cranes.

Category B2

The site is one of the 'n' most important ones in the country for a species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (SPEC 2-3), for which the site protection approach is thought to be appropriate. The maximum of the sites per country is determined by the minimum size of the national population relative to the minimum estimate of the total European population.

A site-based approach would not be appropriate for all species, since many of them is widely dispersed at, at least, at part of its range. However, towards the edge of their distribution they may occur in well-defined sites. To solve this problem the following guidelines were suggested: for each country, holding at least 1% of the total European population of a given SPEC 2 or 3, sites which encompass at least 1% of the national population should be selected.

Category B3

The site is one of the 'n' most important ones in the country for a species with favourable conservation status but concentrated in Europe, and for which the site protection approach is thought to be appropriate. The rules for this category are similar to the previous one.

Category C

The aim of this category is to identify areas which are important on sub-regional level. In Europe it is applied for the European Union taking into account the close link between the IBAs and the implementation of the EU Wild Birds Directive. Category C includes sites in the European Union

which have been designated as Special Protected Areas (SPAs) or selected as candidate SPAs for their ornithological importance. This encompass the following criteria:

1. The site regularly holds significant number of a globally threatened species, or other species of Global Conservation Concern.
2. The site is known to regularly hold at least 1% of a flyway or EU population total of a threatened species.
3. The site is known to regularly hold at least 1% of migratory species not considered threatened.
4. The site is known to regularly hold at least 20,000 migratory waterbirds or 10,000 pairs of migratory seabirds of one or more species.
5. Site is a “bottleneck site” where at least 5,000 storks or at least 3,000 migratory raptors or cranes regularly pass on spring or autumn migration.
6. The site is one of the five most important ones in a particular European region for a given species or subspecies considered threatened in the European Union.
7. A site which has been designated as an SPA or selected as a candidate SPA based on ornithological criteria in recognised use for identifying SPAs.

DESIGNATION OF SITES

For practical conservation, it is crucial to know where are the exact boundaries of a site. Therefore, it is encouraged to delineate IBAs on maps. For this purpose there are guidelines available:

- An IBA, as far as possible, should
 - i. be different in character or habitat or ornithological importance from the surrounding area;
 - ii. exist as an actual or potential protected area with or without buffer zones, or be an area which can be managed in some way for nature conservation;
 - iii. be self-sufficient area - alone or with other sites - which provides all the requirements of the birds which use it during the time they present.
- Where extensive tracts of continuous habitat occur which are important for birds, only character i. and ii. apply. This definition is not applicable to migratory bottleneck sites.
- Practical considerations of how the best the site may be conserved should be the foremost consideration.
- Simple, conspicuous boundaries, such as roads, rivers, railway lines etc. may be used to delimit site margins while features such as watersheds and hilltops may help in places where are no obvious discontinuities. Boundaries of ownership are also relevant.
- There are no fixed maxima or minima for IBAs. The biologically sensible has to be tempered with practical. Neither is there a definitive answer of how to treat cases where a number of small sites neighbour each other. Whether these are best considered a series of separate IBAs or one large one containing areas lacking ornithological significance will depend upon local conservation realities. However, due to large home range of birds, IBAs are usually larger than sites for other taxa. IBAs may include areas which are important for plants or insect, but also may contain areas less valuable from botanical or entomological point of view.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIES ACTION PLANS

In Recommendations No. 48 and 60 of the Bern Convention have requested for the implementation of the European Species Action Plans for the Globally Threatened Species. Most of these plans call for site protection measures (Table 1). Network of key areas sufficiently protected are identified as crucial for the implementation of each action plans. This requires significant efforts from each country from the species' range.

Therefore it is worth to analyse how identifications of IBAs can contribute to EMERALD and Natura 2000 Networks. It is important to emphasize here that many countries in Eastern Europe were now able to fully participate in the review. This resulted in a current number of slightly more than 3500 IBAs that will be included in the review that will appear at the end of 1999 (Heath et al. *in prep.*). Therefore this inventory may significantly contribute to the identification of sites for EMERALD and Natura 2000 Networks.

This potential will be demonstrated through examples on *Pelecanus crispus*, *Otis tarda*, *Larus audouinii* and *Acrocephalus paludicola*.

Bern Convention and the Emerald Network

Recommendation No. 16 (1989) on “Areas of Special Conservation Interest” (ASCI), the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention recommended Parties to “take steps to designate Areas of Special Conservation Interest to ensure that the necessary and appropriate conservation measures are taken for each area situated within their territory or under their responsibility where area fits one or several of the following conditions.:

- a) it contributes substantially to the survival of threatened species, endemic species, or any species listed in Appendices I and II of the convention;
- b) it supports significant numbers of species in an area of high species diversity or supports important populations of one or more species;
- c) it contains an important and/or representative sample of endangered habitat types;
- d) it contains outstanding example of a particular habitat type or a mosaic of different habitat types;
- e) it represents an important area for one or more migratory species;
- f) it otherwise contributes substantially to the achievement of the objectives of the convention.”

The IBA Categories A1, A2 B2, B3, C1, C2 and C6 clearly refer to point a) and b), the IBA Category A3 on biome restricted assemblages relates to point b), and the IBA Categories A4, B1, C3-C5 refer to point e) of the Recommendation No. 16.

Birds Directive and the Natura 2000 Network

Article 4 of the Birds Directive is the most relevant provision for the protection of Important Bird Areas within the EU. Article 4.1 requires:

“The species mentioned in Annex I shall be the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution. [...] Member States shall classify in particular the most suitable territories in number and size as special protection areas for the conservation of these species, taking into account their protection requirements in their geographical sea and land area where this Directive applies.” What is below is too much detail for a general talk on how it could work.

Sites fall into IBA Category C1, C2 and C6 can be regarded as potential SPAs under the Article 4.1.

Additionally Article 4.2 requires similar measures for migratory species: “Member States shall take similar measures for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I, bearing in mind their need for protection in the geographical sea and land area where this Directive applies, as regards their breeding, moulting and wintering areas, staging posts along their migration routes. [...] To this end Member states shall pay particular attention to the protection of wetlands and particularly wetlands of international importance.”

Categories C3, C4 and C5 can fulfil the requirements of site selection according to Article 4.2.

However, it was explained above how each IBA Category relates to the ASCIs and SPAs. The BirdLife's IBA DataBase, when it will be complete, will be able to:

- produce lists of IBAs which are particularly important for any species affected by the action plans;
- identify where are gaps in the network of protected sites for a particular species;
- show these on thematic maps using the GIS technology;
- analyse threats in order to support further planning of policy development and site management actions, but may be also useful at the review of the Species Action Plans.

BirdLife International hopes that governments and institutions responsible for the designation of either Areas of Special Conservation Interest under the EMERALD Network or Special Protection Areas under the Natura 2000 Network will find the IBAs a useful tool for their work. Data are available at the national BirdLife Partners and BirdLife International would be happy to provide further assistance.

Table 1 – References to designation of key sites in the Species Action Plans

Species	Cons. Objectives
Zino's Petrel <i>Pterodroma madeira</i>	–
Pygmy Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i>	1.1.1, 1.2.3, 2.1
Dalmatian Pelican <i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	1.1, 2.1.1 ²
Lesser White-fronted Goose <i>Anser erythropus</i>	1.2, 2.2
Red-breasted Goose <i>Branta ruficollis</i>	1.2, 2.2.1
Marbled Teal <i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	2.1.1, 2.1.3
White-headed Duck <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.2.1
Cinereous Vulture <i>Aegypius monachus</i>	2.1.1
Imperial Eagle <i>Aquila heliaca</i>	1.1.3, 2.1.1
Spanish Imperial Eagle <i>Aquila adalberti</i>	2.1.2
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>	2.1
Concrake <i>Crex crex</i>	1.2.2, 2.1.2
Great Bustard <i>Otis tarda</i>	1.1.3
Houbara Bustard <i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>	1.3
Slender-billed Curlew <i>Numenius tenuirostris</i>	1.1.4, 2.1.1
Andouin's Gull <i>Larus audouinii</i>	1.3, 2.1.1, 2.3.1
Madeira Laurel Pigeon <i>Columba trocaz</i>	2.2.1
Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon <i>Columba bollii</i>	1.1.1
White-tailed Laurel Pigeon <i>Columba junoniae</i>	1.1.1
Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>	2.1.1
Blue Chaffinch <i>Fringilla teydea</i>	1.4
Azores Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula murina</i>	–

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APPENDIX 10

BirdLife's vision for the establishment of a European Bird Monitoring System as a basis for biodiversity indicators of sustainability

by Richard D. Gregory, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds