

Proceedings of the Specialist Groups Meeting 4 – 5 June 2004, Wageningen, The Netherlands

Lead: Tunde Ojei, Chairperson: Doug Taylor

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Summary of actions agreed

The Workshop agreed the following actions to be taken by Wetlands International, Specialist Groups or other partners concerned.

5. Update WI Strategy 10 year Strategy development -

- **Coordinators** are to send the names of their group's focal points in the respective WI focus regions that can be consulted in the Strategy development process in the regions and any comments should be sent directly to TO, JM or DT directly.
- *Strategy consultation document is to be sent to SG coordinators – Strategy regional WI focal points and TO*

6. Waterbird Population Estimate 4 update-

- *Wetlands International and Birdlife International agreed to collaborate in order to adopt a unified taxonomy and to incorporate and share changes in taxonomy for their respective databases. **WI and BL to coordinate action on this.***
- *A classic example where SGs can make input is in the on-going discussion in the Ramsar STRP regarding a possible new 1% taxonomic criterion for non-avian taxa. **SG Coordinators are encouraged to participate (TO to be consulted by Coordinators regarding access to STRP website)***
- *Given the substantial time it takes to adequately assemble population data and review size estimates and trends, it is important for WI to have clear forward plans for products such as WPE, this would greatly increase participation and can help guide contributions better e.g. a forward plan for WPE5 and beyond – **SD to develop a forward plan for WPE5 –WPE7 as soon as possible***

7. SG Presentations on 2003 Achievements and challenges for 2004/05 -

TWSG

Action point:

- BH was urged to share TWSG proposal formats and sources of funding information with other interested SGs.

Woodcock and Snipe SG

Action point:

- In view of the interest of the group to have representation in Madagascar, the coordinator for AfWC in Madagascar should be contacted. There is a clear need for SGs to link up more closely with the IWC network, especially the waterbird groups. For the groups' plans in Asia, it should link up with WI Malaysia Office and more importantly the Asian Waterfowl Census to fill the gap. **(TO, WH and YF to liaise on this)**
- In view of the group's activities in terms of bag statistics, it would be helpful to further explore how bag statistics can be incorporated into WPE in future. **(YF is to lead on this)**

Divers and Loon SG:

Action point:

- JK will further develop the proposal to cover a wider scope which incorporates the monitoring results itself instead of just the status of the monitoring as it stands now.

Seaduck SG:

Action point:

- SP, WH and SD are to further discuss the possibility of incorporating seaduck data into IWC.

Flamingo SG:

Action points:

- A strong area of interest which the coordinator suggested was to follow-up on building a strong partnership with the International Flamingo Foundation, the Foundation is already aware of the existence of this SG, but the link needs to be targeted and strengthened. It is a good fundraising opportunity. – **(A new coordinator of the group is to explore this potential)**
- Suggested area of intervention: The group needs to develop means and studies aimed at gathering new information on Flamingo movements, especially with recent reports presenting large counts in areas where numbers occurring were previously thought to be pretty low in the past. **(A potential focus area for the new Coordinator)**
- **TO** is to post a letter from AJ on the FSG webpage, calling for interested persons and nominations to the post of group Coordinator.

Storks, Ibises and spoonbills SG:

Action point:

- An interesting point raised in the presentation was the combination of site and species information, the group, WI and BL was advised to further explore this in such a way that a standard format that incorporates this information is developed. **(WI and WB and BL)**
- The group was advised to check possibilities within CMS to continue some of its related work, some funding is available within CMS for studies on black faced spoonbills. **(WB to take action)**

Waterbird harvest SG:

Action Points:

- The SG is to explore possibility of holding another meeting of the group in Senegal at the sustainable hunting workshop in Dakar, October 2004. **(GD to liaise closely with ONCFS organisation and WH on this)**
- Incorporation of involuntary harvest such as by catch in hanging into the scope of the group should be explored. **(GD it could be an agenda discussion for the next group meeting possibly in Dakar)**

International Wader Study Group:

Action Points :

- Common protocols to allow the sharing of information and data should be encouraged amongst groups and WI **(All SG coordinators and WI)**
- It was agreed that a common standard for how population estimates are derived should be publicised on the WI website. And for all SG websites where this estimates are published, including WSG. **(WI is to develop this)**

Plenary discussion:

Action points:

- The unsuccessful proposal regarding support from AEWA Secretariat towards dissemination within AEWA member states, of SG scientific papers and publications relevant to the AEWA region should be redone and it should stress more clearly the relevance of the materials especially to the GEF/AEWA project and examples of these materials and possibly a full list of all publications to date should be included in the package. **(TO and WH are to redo the existing proposal and liaise with DS for comments before sending off to AEWA)**
- Another important point was the need for groups to share information amongst themselves on how they raise funds for their publications and comparable costs of production, especially groups that have maintained the frequency and standard of their publications **(TO is to develop means of facilitating this action in consultation with SG coordinators)**
- In terms of regional representation, the groups agreed to the need to develop or further strengthen links with IWC networks as well as actively promoting membership opportunities. **(TO, SD and WH are to regularly update both networks of developments within the respective IWC and SG networks as a way of building the links)**
- The meeting agreed that it would be good for SGs to quickly provide available electronic copies of past and new Newsletters which are presently unavailable on WI website to Wetlands International for posting on the respective group web pages. **(Coordinators are to send copies of past and present newsletters of their group to TO)**
- A database on potential donors should be developed and made easily available to SGs **(TO, BH and MGD are to collaborate in developing this)**

8. Species Information service update and Species Red listing:

Action points :

- A clear need to align objectives and collaborate on developing a sort of unifying database, otherwise most organisations would keep running parallel databases without clear relationship. The possibility of linking existing indices should also be explored by **WI and BL**
- The meeting requested for regular updates and consultation on the SIS development, such as the opportunity provided through this presentation. **(SS)**

9. Update on SG network development support

Action point:

- Coordinators are to commit themselves to improving activity information dissemination and membership roles as a way of gradually integrating its membership as a whole on their role as members and more importantly part of a global network. **(All SG Coordinators)**
- Details of IWC focal points are also to be made available to the coordinators for the purpose of establishing contact with them **(TO)**.

10. Developing and improving delivery of SG function

Action point:

- A guidance document outlining how to contact members and an indication of what level of membership should be contacted for specific situations following the points raised by SP should be developed by **TO in consultation with all SG Coordinators**
- WI should combine efforts with IUCN SSC on the members' database to make it more efficient. **TO and MGD**
- Might be relevant to make this database transparent in members listing and make all membership records available and this however should not encourage inactive members. **(All Group coordinators)**
- It was also proposed that coordinators should take a delegatory approach in terms delegating roles to its membership as a way of motivating the members, for example active communicators within the groups can be focal points to those on the field **(All Group Coordinators)**

Species Database:

Action Points

- WI is to circulate a document highlighting the needs assessment and rationale for the need for this database to be integrated and managed through a single source and a proposal for follow up should be developed with regards to things to consider in terms of any alteration to the existing models and why we need to have access to them **(WH and SD)**
- Possibility of a dedicated workshop with these groups on this may be explored **(WH, SD and the relevant group coordinators)**

Capacity Building:

Action point:

- A brainstorming session at the next Specialist Group meeting on 'actual' needs, potential projects, and how it fits into WI Strategy, was requested, but more importantly this being a participatory approach would be quite useful in stimulating the groups to be better focussed on important and relevant activities and what specific support role would be required from WI. Output would be a guidance document on priority setting. **(TO add as an activity to be undertaken at the next SG Coordinators meeting to ensure the development of the guidance document on priority setting)**
- Capacity building opportunities for groups should be also explored on a regional basis **(should be considered under the funding possibilities and incorporated in the brainstorming session by TO, BH and MGD)**

Potential joint project initiatives:

Action point:

- The meeting agreed that these opportunities were far too important to miss and they requested for an update with very clear activities for them prior to the kick off of the projects, in a nutshell, the interest of groups to be involved in these projects was clearly indicated. (Interested SG Coordinators are to liaise directly with WH and AS for WI and BL respectively)

Future SG Meetings:**Action point:**

TO is advised to contact Jean-Paul Taris to explore the possibility of holding the next meeting in Tour du Valat, and the meeting should be planned for after spring preferably early summer before the beginning of holidays.

11. Fundraising for SG activities – who, where and how?**Action Points**

- The meeting agreed that TO and MGD are to discuss the metadatabase and a first draft of clear description of what this database would deliver and how Specialist Groups can support it, should be developed and sent to BH for his comments before being sent to other coordinators. TO should keep the new WI Business Development Officer in the loop.

12. November 2004 BOM Meeting, Bangkok / IUCN Congress**Action points: -**

- **WI Management team** should check the possibility of inviting the IUCN SSC Chair from November 2004, Holly Dublin to the WI BOM
- **TO** to explore the possibility of holding a brief session of new or reconstituted SG coordinators in Bangkok
- Feedback to Coordinators on planning for both meetings and specific roles for SGs should be ensured **(TO & MGD)**
- Coordinators are to endeavour to promote the WI Board of Members meeting and IUCN congress in their network and the strategic opportunities **(All SG Coordinators)**
- **TO** is to provide to WI BoD, a guidance framework to help in the appointment of coordinators for the groups and this should be done fairly quickly especially with the upcoming WI BoM.

13.SG annual reporting and work plans - how to streamline the SSC and WI existing requirements**Action Point:**

- TO and MGD are to develop a letter and report format, requesting that reports to WI by SGs should serve the same purpose for IUCN SSC, highlighting the benefit of this idea and sent to the incumbent IUCN SSC Chair, David Bracket for final approval

14 . International Meetings

Action point: WH and SD are to check the possibility of flagging WPE at the Pan African Ornithological Conference in Tunisia, November, 2004

15. Any other business**Action point:**

- A brief paper would be available to WI in the next couple of weeks regarding global IWC Committee and it would be shared with the SGs coordinators.

Agenda for the Meeting

1. **Introductions apologies; workshop arrangements (TO)**
2. **Opening Address (JM)**
3. **Adoption of minutes of May 2003 meeting (TO)**
4. **Adoption of the meeting agenda**
5. **Update WI Strategy 10 year Strategy dev. - (DT)**
(Expected roles of Specialist Groups in the process)
6. **Waterbird Population Estimate 4 update – (SD)**

7. **SG Presentations on 2003 Achievements and challenges for 2004/05** (WH)
8. **Species Information service update and Red listing:** (SS) IUCN SSC and (AS), Birdlife International
9. **Update on SG network development support-** African Waterfowl Census linkage and Freshwater Fish Specialist Group Update – (TO)
10. **Developing and improving delivery of SG functions** (TO)
 - a) Centralised SG project / research database
 - b) Membership databases – how freely can this be used to reach Members and to what extent?
 - c) What capacity building inputs does the network require
 - d) Joint project ideas – (WH) & (AS)
 - e) Suggestions for future meetings
11. **Fundraising for SG activities – who, where and how?** (BH)
 - a) development of online database of funding sources and other ideas and initiatives
12. **November 2004 BOM Meeting, Bangkok / IUCN Congress**
(DT / MGD)
 - a) Appointments and re-appointments to the Board
 - b) Appointments and re-appointments as Coordinators
 - c) Booklet of SG reports: structure, content and timing
 - d) Board meeting draft programme and arrangements
 - e) Other meetings- opportunity for side meetings
 - f) Funding and travel discussions
13. **SG annual reporting and work plans - how to streamline the SSC and WI existing requirements** – (MGD / TO)
14. **International meetings**
 - a) INTECOL Meeting
 - b) Goose, Swan and Duck Study Group of Northern Eurasia. The 3rd International Waterfowl Symposium of Northern Eurasia 6 - 9 October 2005 Saint-Petersburg, Russia.
 - c) Pan African Ornithological congress, Tunisia, November 2004
 - d) Planned Group meetings for 2004 and 2005
15. **Any other business**



Group photograph including SG coordinators, WI Staff and Partner Organisation representatives

Attendance List:

Present:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alan Johnson (AJ) | Flamingo SG |
| Baz Hughes (BH) | Threatened Waterfowl SG |
| Joseph Kerekes (JK) | Diver/ Loon SG |
| Stefan Pihl (SP) | Seaduck SG |
| Yves Ferrand (YF) | Woodcock and Snipe SG |
| Mennobart van Eerden (ME) | Cormorant SG |
| Wim van den Bossche (WB) | Storks Ibises and Spoonbills SG |
| Gilles Deplanque (GD) | ..Waterbird harvest SG |
| Richard Hearn (RH) |Duck SG (Asst. Coordinator) |
| David Stroud (DS) | International Wader Study Group |

In attendance:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Jane Madgwick (JM) | Wetlands International |
| Doug Taylor - (DT) | Wetlands International |
| Simon Delany - (SD) | Wetlands International |
| Ward Hagemeijer- (WH) | Wetlands International |
| Tunde Ojei- (TO) | Wetlands International |
| Ali Stattersfield (AS) | Birdlife International |

Ian Burfield - (IB)	Birdlife International
Stuart Salter - (SS)	IUCN Species Survival Commission
Mariano Gimenez- Dixon (MGD)	IUCN Species Survival Commission

Apologies:

Jim Kushlan	Heron SG
Kevin Erwin	Wetlands restoration SG
Jan Beekman	Swan SG
Peter Bayliss	Wetlands Inventory Assessment and Monitoring SG
Roberto Schlatter	Swan SG (New World)
James Robinson (JR)	Duck SG
Gerard Boere	WI
Masayuki Kurechi	Goose SG
Alain Crivelli	Pelican SG
Daniel Anderson	Pelican SG (New World)
Malcolm Coulter	Storks, Ibises and spoonbills
Christine Prietto	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
Bart Ebbinge	Goose SG

Notes of the Proceedings

All presentations at the meeting will be copied on Compact Disc (CD) and enclosed in the final version of this report.

1 Introductions

The introductions covered individual expectations from the meeting as well any interesting thing that happened in the past week. In terms of expectations, it was obvious that most participants were determined to further strengthen the existing partnership with WI and more importantly, successful implementation of agreed joint actions after the meeting.

2 Opening

The meeting was declared open by Wetlands International CEO, JM and in her address, she re-emphasized on the value of the partnership between the Specialist Groups and WI as an integral part of the organization and she also thanked Specialist Group coordinators for their support to WI, most especially at the Global Flyway conference in Edinburgh, April, 2004 as well as other support such as their continued contribution to Waterbird Population Estimate and other advisory services.

She went further to highlight some key outcomes for WI in the Edinburgh Declaration which she said would further consolidate Wetlands International activities with Specialist Groups, such as hopefully establishing more agreements in the Central Asian and Pacific flyways and making data and information more relevant for policy users and decision makers. Her address also briefly highlighted the on-going WI 10 year Strategy plan development, which she described as a Strategy that is intended to inspire the organization and greatly help give the organization more focus as a single global organization and she asked the meeting to come up with structured suggestions on how they intend to be engaged in the process, especially at the regional level. Her address also updated the meeting on the new Freshwater Fish Specialist Group as an indication of Wetlands International's commitment to establish focused groups as need arises and she also mentioned that a Wetlands and Poverty Alleviation **Working Group** is presently being constituted following the Board's approval of the group.

The address also featured opportunities for collaboration with Specialist Groups such as the WPE4 and the recently approved GEF/AEWA flyway project which has potential roles for Specialist Groups, in identifying critical sites in the flyway and under its capacity building component. Furthermore, she announced the on-going process to recruit a Business Development Officer to help identify and build the fundraising potentials of the organization. On a final note, Coordinators were reminded that Wetlands International counts on their support and attendance at the upcoming Wetlands International Board of Members Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand November 26th – 27th, 2004, She then, wished the meeting a productive two day session and declared it open.

3 Adoption of Minutes of last meeting:

In the absence of any corrections or comments to the minutes of the May 2003 meeting, TO called for the adoption of the minutes. JK moved for adoption and this was seconded by SP.

4 Adoption of Agenda

Prior to adopting the agenda, there was a request for adequate time to be made available for discussions under any other business and the agenda was adopted by the meeting afterwards.

5 Update on Wetlands International Strategy development

In the presentation, DT gave an overview of the need for this Strategy and what has been done so far in terms of its development and the next steps. He said the Strategy would be based on a 10 year Vision (with goals) and 3 year strategic plans with targets to address the global goals. The presentation outlined key steps that had been undertaken already such as interviews with partners of WI, a workshop of staff and selected partners held in Tour du Valat to develop a framework for the development of the overall Strategy and how this was considered in the process, especially in identifying strong and potential 'niches' of WI as an organization. Furthermore, he said the existing 3 year Strategy has not been used as a pre-condition for the development of this new one.

In his final remarks, although a formal consultation document will be sent to SG Coordinators, he asked SGs to already start thinking about activities that can help WI achieve the 10 year goals - a draft was presented to the meeting. Feedback can be sent directly to DT, JM or TO, but more importantly is to establish contacts with the regional teams who would be leading the regional component development of the Strategy in July and August. He further mentioned this process as an opportunity for groups to clearly consolidate their role in the organization especially in the regional processes which are expected to be completed before early September, 2004. He then presented the 'vision' and the 10 year draft goals (see CD) after which he called for comments and any questions requiring clarification.

Discussions-

BH: By coincidence, WWT is undergoing the development of a realistic 10 year Strategy in a seemingly similar way as WI and furthermore, it also has a new CEO just like WI, however, an issue that is still undecided is if Biological indicators would be the Strategy indicators or processes?

DT: The regional meetings will decide precisely what they want to use as measurables for biological targets, it's more like an open question. The Strategy will endeavour to be goal driven rather than programmatically driven.

JM: Biological issues would be duly considered at the next level, and it is expected that these would be some of the deliverables from the regional workshops to the Strategy.

DS: The effort of WI to develop a 10 year Strategy is a good one and it should be looked at in terms of what it can do as an organization and just as importantly what it cannot do or should not!

SP: Wetlands International is not as recognized as much as it ought to – is there a 10 year goal for the organizational structure to help deliver the work?

JM: I agree it's worth reflecting on, however we had another workshop of senior staff of the organization prior to the Strategy workshop and we came up with an immediate agenda to address this and our capacity in terms of offices and people.

SP: Do we have the potential to grow to a global organization to achieve most of the goals?

JM: First we need to define what the global organization for WI should be, If we can definitely make an impact based on our goals then we can easily develop into that global organization as you mentioned, however the key hurdle towards achieving this is having a shared vision.

DT: WI presently has a mixture of people in offices which is partly by design and by chance, but a key question would be how do we address the needs and aspiration of our membership

and what are our deliverables and impossibilities referring to DS's earlier comment, furthermore by virtue of our membership WI is already global.

JM: I would like to request that this meeting finds time to go through the draft goals and specifically comment on them and any related matters, but more importantly, how Specialist Groups intend to engage in the process.

SP: Is an evaluation of SGs part of this process? It's an opportunity to create more efficiency in groups.

JM: Not explicitly, but in terms of the partners report carried out by a consultant, which was on the organization as a whole and not exactly departmentalized, however at the regional level, there is still an opportunity for more SG input and possibly evaluation as you said.

DS: The Strategy should also consider forging new partnerships, especially in identified gap areas. There might be potential to establish MoC with pre-existing organizations in a similar fashion to that with WSG

Action point:

- *The presentation was to be printed and circulated to all participants for a more detailed discussion the following day. (done and further discussed)*

***** Discussion on the proposed 10 year Strategy goals of WI
Led by DT and WH (Held on the 2nd day of the meeting)**

Following discussions on update of the Strategy on the first day of the meeting, it was agreed that coordinators should be given time to go through the presentation material under this topic 5 in the agenda.

In his speech before the discussion, DT mentioned that WI was in a process of picking up real conservation goals / outcomes in its Strategy as against former perception of being a solely research and data collection organisation into more conservation outcome oriented. He went further to highlight feedback from WI partners based on feedback from a survey prior to the workshop held in Tour du Valat to develop the framework for the Strategy goals and he went further to request that a key issue would be to get their valuable feedback regarding the 10 year goals and targets as well as how they would want to be involved at the regional processes e.g. the European regional Strategy workshop.

The meeting was then taken through the goals as presented in DT's presentation for their comments. **(The consultation document for the Strategy is available on the enclosed cd)**

Comments: On a general note, the Coordinators were of the opinion that the Strategy focussed more on flyways and had less indication of species interest most especially non-migrant waterbirds. In response to this, DT and WH mentioned that this point may not be presently stated explicitly, but it was incorporated. **The meeting also agreed that a note should explicitly indicate incorporation on resident waterbirds in the Strategy, otherwise it may be completely invisible in the Strategy.**

Goal 1: DS - In view of the X critical catchments in this goal, it seems more of a target than a 10 year goal. **AS** – Could the goal be more specific in the targets to clearly identify some recognisable role for SGs B.H- Meaningful biological targets by 2008 seems unrealistic, this time scale should be extended. **MGD**- Reaching these goals would largely be dependent on partnerships, is there a partnership focussed goal?

Goal 2: SP – The issue of critical sites need to be well defined and furthermore, 2008 is almost impossible to achieve this. WH responded by saying that definitely WI would work with Birdlife International who have already done some work in this direction. **AS** – It might be relevant to add species targeted action plans under this as a means of bringing out species interest, which presently is not explicit. **DS** – I believe waterbirds should be explicit, as far as

this looks it seems species conservation is missing, noting both resident and migratory species. It is also important to know what critical sites there are before indicating a %, therefore it may be better to refer to numbers instead of % except if the number of critical sites are known.

Goal 3:- MGD- Values should be well understood in monetary terms and species should also be included

Goal 4: A key issue about this goal, was that the target stakeholder was missing in the sentence and therefore should be in the Header

Goal 5: A key comment on this goal was in ‘training facilities’ this was said to be misleading to lead into thinking of structures as against processes, it was recommended that this should be reworded. It was noted that WPE5 due for publication in 2008 would be strategically important since it would be these estimates and trend assessments that would inform the assessment of the 2010 target fulfilment. It would be particularly important for full engagement by SGs in 2006 -2007 to feed into this.

Action points: -

- **SG Coordinators** are to send the names of their group’s focal points in the respective WI focus regions that can be consulted in the Strategy development process in the regions and any comments should be sent directly to TO, JM or DT directly.
- Strategy consultation document is to be sent to SG coordinators – Strategy regional WI focal points and TO

6 Waterbird Population Estimate 4 update

Prior to the presentation, given by SD, DT briefly highlighted the value of WPE as an information base to multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Ramsar and Bonn Conventions and the opportunity this presents to SGs as a global window to disseminate their data and information.

Simon’s presentation was aimed at stimulating the existing collaboration with SGs in producing the Waterbird Population Estimates, most especially WPE4 and the presentation was in three parts, one defining biogeographic populations, then a brief history of the 3 earlier editions of WPE and finally, a request for comments on how SG contribution to WPEs can be better improved and what SGs can do with these estimates. He further mentioned that it is aimed that in WPE5 data quality codes and periods for estimates/trends would be incorporated.

Questions raised:

- Talking about the ‘real’ reflection of the trend estimates, what can be done in terms of contradictions in trend estimates from past WPEs for example in white and black storks, and is there a plan to go back in time to amend these records?
- What plans are in place between WI, and BL to collaborate more closely and share their taxonomy?
- WPE is a global product, however how can we improve the coverage of uncovered areas through the support of Specialist Groups?
- Timetable for WPE4 – this was given as Deadline for submission –December 2004 and public submission via website June-August 2005

Action Points:

- *Wetlands International and Birdlife International agreed to collaborate in order to adopt a unified taxonomy and to incorporate and share changes in taxonomy for their respective databases. **WI and BL to coordinate action on this.***

- *A classic example where SGs can make input is in the on-going discussion in the Ramsar STRP regarding a possible new 1% taxonomic criterion for non-avian taxa. **SG Coordinators are encouraged to participate (TO to be consulted by Coordinators regarding access to STRP website)***
- *Given the substantial time it takes to adequately assemble population data and review size estimates and trends, it is important for WI to have clear forward plans for products such as WPE, this would greatly increase participation and can help guide contributions better e.g. a forward plan for WPE5 and beyond – **SD to develop a forward plan for WPE5 –WPE7 as soon as possible***

7 Specialist Group Presentations – SG Coordinators present

Facilitated by WH: SG Coordinators were requested to make presentations with the aim of highlighting their major achievements in 2003 /2004 and major challenges for 2004 / 2005 for 10 minutes, inclusive of discussion time. This process was coordinated by WH and the order of the presentations is as listed below and the presentations are in the accompanying CD to this report.

7.1 Threatened waterfowl SG (TWSG)

Action point:

- *BH was urged to share TWSG proposal formats and sources of funding information with other interested SGs.*

7.2 Woodcock and Snipe SG (WSSG)

Action point:

- *In view of the interest of the group to have representation in Madagascar, the coordinator for AfWC in Madagascar should be contacted. There is a clear need for SGs to link up more closely with the IWC network, especially the waterbird groups. For the groups' plans in Asia, it should link up with WI Malaysia Office and more importantly the Asian Waterfowl Census to fill the gap. **(TO, WH and YF to liaise on this)***
- *In view of the group's activities in terms of bag statistics, it would be helpful to further explore how bag statistics can be incorporated into WPE in future. **(YF is to lead on this)***

7.3 Divers and Loons SG (DLSG)

Discussion point:

DLSG was advised that rather than having a project only on the evaluation of Loon monitoring worldwide, it should also consider the results of the monitoring itself, which seems to be more important.

Action point:

- *JK will further develop the proposal to cover a wider scope which incorporates the monitoring results itself instead of just the status of the monitoring as it stands now.*

7.4 Seaduck SG (SdSG)

SdSG presentation was a brief report and not a PowerPoint presentation, hence not available on the cd. The coordinator mentioned in his report that nothing really happened in 2003, but the group is still seeking for funds to print the proceedings of the Eiders meeting held in 2000. He also mentioned the appointment of a regional coordinator for East Asia and planning for the next Seaduck SG meeting around the 3rd International Waterfowl Symposium of Northern Eurasia 6 - 9 October 2005 Saint-Petersburg, Russia. He said that presently the group is supporting work in Northern Russia, but its major interest would be for Eastern Asia

Discussion points: A key issue that would be good to consider by the group is the integration on Seaduck data into the IWC, however in order to follow this through marine sites need to be first clearly defined as this would help focus in what scope we would be working in this regard.

Action point:

- *SP, WH and SD are to further discuss the possibility of incorporating seaduck data into IWC.*

7.5 Duck SG (DSG)

Discussion points : The on-going effort of JR and RH in reviving the group was acknowledged, especially the useful outcomes from the meeting of the group in Edinburgh in April, 2004.

7.6 Flamingo SG (FSG)

The Flamingo SG presentation was also a brief report and not a PowerPoint presentation, therefore is also not available on the enclosed cd. The group's coordinator mentioned that the next Newsletter of the group is presently at the printers and would be out soon, the group presently has about 40 members and the last gathering of the members of the group was in 1998 in Florida. In terms of membership distribution, it is widespread geographically in areas where Flamingos occur but low in number of members. He went further to request for nominations for the position of Coordinators for the group. He also said that there are some questions which need to be looked at by the group which include, whether Flamingos from the rift valley go to East or southern Africa and North.

In the Mediterranean, there continues to be strong study and research in Tour du Valat and two regional workshops have also been held. The group also needs some support especially in the area of printing and distribution of its publications and Newsletters. The group intends to hold in collaboration with Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), a workshop on the Flamingo action plan development process, which was discussed at the action plan meeting in Edinburgh. And in terms of monitoring, the group has close collaboration with WWT under the Darwin project in East Africa.

Action points:

- *A strong area of interest which the coordinator suggested was to follow-up on building a strong partnership with the International Flamingo Foundation, the Foundation is already aware of the existence of this SG, but the link needs to be targeted and strengthened. It is a good fundraising opportunity. – (A new coordinator of the group is to explore this potential)*
- *Suggested area of intervention: The group needs to develop means and studies aimed at gathering new information on Flamingo movements, especially with recent reports*

presenting large counts in areas where numbers occurring were previously thought to be low. (A potential focus area for the new Coordinator)

- *TO is to post a letter from AJ on the FSG webpage, calling for interested persons and nominations to the post of group Coordinator.*

7.7 Storks Ibises & Spoonbills SG (SISSG)

Discussion points:

With regards to the recent avian flu crises and link to waterbirds, the effort of some SGs was acknowledged for their response to the discussions when the call was made. The meeting was also informed that a working group is presently being composed with the aim of working with FAO on these issues and this offers an opportunity for most groups to check potential possibilities of being part of this group or working through WI focal point in this group.

In relation to the group structure, one of the issues proposed was for the SG to carve a specific focus taxon for itself and drop the present more historic title of 3 taxa, or better still carve out single working groups from within the existing group to specialise on the 3 taxa in its name.

Action point:

- *An interesting point raised in the presentation was the combination of site and species information, the group, WI and BL was advised to further explore this in such a way that a standard format that incorporates this information is developed. (WI, WB and BL)*
- *The group was advised to check possibilities within CMS to continue some of its related work, some funding is available within CMS for studies on Black-faced Spoonbills. (WB to take action)*

7.8 Waterbird Harvest SG (WHSG)

Discussion points: The group will endeavour to hold another meeting in Senegal at the sustainable hunting workshop in Dakar in October, 2004.

It is also worth exploring the opportunity of the group collating all work done by a whole lot of students in most part of the globe on waterbird harvest e.g. some recognised work is in the Inner Delta of the Niger etc and Daniel Blanco from WI's South America office has also worked extensively on this.

Involuntary harvest such as by catch in hanging is an important area that less importance is presently attached to but is quite crucial and therefore could be a harvest angle that the group should check possibilities to promote further under its scope of work.

Action Points:

- *The SG is to explore possibility of holding another meeting of the group in Senegal at the sustainable hunting workshop in Dakar, October 2004. (GD to liaise closely with ONCFS organisation and WH on this)*
- *Incorporation of involuntary harvest such as by catch in hanging into the scope of the group should be explored. (GD it could be an agenda discussion for the next group meeting possibly in Dakar)*

7.9 International Wader Study Group (WSG)

Discussion Point : The main issues included:

- a) Slowly declining membership (now only c.560) resulting in additional focus by the Executive Committee in reversing this.

- b) Annual conferences held, most recently in Cadiz, Spain attended by 130 people from 20 countries. Forward planning to 2006, together with plans for special meeting in N.America and Ukraine
- c) Publication programme continues – 100th bulletin recently published – a major review of big issues on Wader research – Regional editors appointed, several issues of ad hoc – International Wader Study series published.
- d) Large number of internationally Co-ordinated projects underway

Key issues:

- 1) Improved regional coverage and membership outwith Eurasia. Africa and Americas especially important.
- 2) Financing publications – sources of finance needed
- 3) No professional input at all to running of WSG – entirely voluntary nature gives constraints as to what is possible
- 4) Publication of WSG Bulletin on website – risk of undermining incentives to join group (Group dependent on membership fees for income)
- 5) How best to disseminate WSGB and other publications to key audiences especially in Africa.

Action Points :

- *common protocols to allow the sharing of information and data should be encouraged amongst groups and WI (All SG coordinators and WI)*
- *It was agreed that a common standard for how population estimates are derived should be publicised on the WI website. And for all SG websites where this estimates are published, including WSG. (WI is to develop this)*

7.10 Pelican SG (PSG)

Discussions were not held because the coordinator of the group was unavoidably absent and his report was read by TO (see CD for presentation).

7.11 Cormorant SG (CSG)

– see cd (a key area of interest of the group just like the Pelican group is in the interrelationship of Cormorants and fishes, since Cormorants are also fish eaters)

Discussion point:

A key area of interest that may be valuable is to show in reports, combination of roost counts and breeding counts and this also applies to other groups as well.

Cormorant population in Western Europe is quite stable, however in the Eastern part, it is increasing and there are several reduction measures adopted to reduce the numbers.

7.12 Plenary discussion

(Led by WH)

Some of the issues picked up in the plenary were;

-The current inadequate share and dissemination of information on group activities and results by groups, in spite of available platforms and tools

-Need for support to fully disseminate and develop information materials such as Newsletters e.g. postage or part production costs.

-Regional representation of groups and lack of sufficient geographical coverage

A question was raised regarding any chance of both WI and BL combining efforts in counting the birds in Sudan? This was accepted as a good idea, however not advised in view of present political situation in Sudan.

Action points:

- *The unsuccessful proposal regarding support from AEWA Secretariat towards dissemination within AEWA member states, of SG scientific papers and publications relevant to the AEWA region should be redone and it should stress more clearly the relevance of the materials especially to the GEF/AEWA project and examples of these materials and possibly a full list of all publications to date should be included in the package. (TO and WH are to redo the existing proposal and liaise with DS for comments before sending off to AEWA)*
- *Another important point was the need for groups to share information amongst themselves on how they raise funds for their publications and comparable costs of production, especially groups that have maintained the frequency and standard of their publications (TO is to develop means of facilitating this action in consultation with SG coordinators)*
- *In terms of regional representation, the groups agreed to the need to develop or further strengthen links with IWC networks as well as actively promoting membership opportunities. (TO, SD and WH are to regularly update both networks of developments within the respective IWC and SG networks as a way of building the links)*
- *The meeting agreed that it would be good for SGs to quickly provide available electronic copies of past and new Newsletters to Wetlands International for posting on the respective group web pages. (Coordinators are to send copies of past and present newsletters of their group to TO)*
- *A database of potential donors should be developed and made easily available to SGs (TO, BH and MGD are to collaborate in developing this)*

8 Species Information service update and Species Red listing

Presentation by SS and AS

Discussion points:

The meeting agreed that with regards to new Red listing there are several potential opportunities of working together with BL, complimentary in areas where information is presently lacking. Birdlife International's next steps according to AS, would be in the area of monitoring the IBAs and fortunately this as well as monitoring of IWC sites would be considered under the GEF AEWA project.

With regards to the Species Information Service, the meeting observed that there is still not a clear and precise demonstration on how this relates to the Red listing process and exactly what is the added value to the existing process, the potentials for this relationship need to be fully integrated and made clearer, it was agreed that if it can clearly show this link, then it would have a much wider acceptance.

Action points :

- *A clear need to align objectives and collaborate on developing a sort of unifying database, otherwise most organisations would keep running parallel databases*

*without clear relationship. The possibility of linking existing indices should also be explored by **WI and BL***

- *The meeting requested for regular updates and consultation on the SIS development, such as the opportunity provided through this presentation (SS)*

The day's proceedings came to an end at 5.15pm.

A dinner was hosted by WI in the evening, and a presentation was made to Alan Johnson, the outgoing Flamingo SG Coordinator as a token of appreciation for his long term active role and support to WI. Alan has been invited to become an Associated Expert of Wetlands International.

Day 2 (5th June, 2004)

9 Update on SG network development support

(In view of time constraints, this presentation was deferred from the previous day)

9.1 AWC linkage and Freshwater Fish SG

Led by TO

Discussion points: In terms of bridging the existing gap in communication between group members and WI, as well as the value of making the effort to bridge this gap, it was agreed that, at least coordinators should endeavour to help raise the awareness amongst their members on what WI does and the value of the existing partnership between their group and WI as an organisation. Furthermore the meeting saw the benefits especially in terms of geographical spread in linking up with the IWC network especially based on the outcome of the meeting with African Waterfowl Census Committee as a way of getting active members. The meeting also appreciated the progress update on the development of the FWF SG.

Action point:

- *Coordinators are to commit themselves to improving activity information dissemination and membership roles as a way of gradually integrating its membership as a whole on their role as members and more importantly part of a global network. (All SG Coordinators)*
- *Details of IWC focal points are also to be made available to the coordinators for the purpose of establishing contacts with them (TO).*

10 Developing and improving delivery of SG Functions

The presentation is available in the enclosed cd.

10.1 was discussed under 10.4

10.1 Members and Membership Database

DT and TO explained that the present situation in terms of SG membership database and its management is totally handled by the IUCN SSC, however these records cannot be said to be complete, since the records are only of what has been provided by coordinators and in some cases no records were provided.

Furthermore, they mentioned that there has not been a real consensus on what the lines of communication between WI and its individual group members should be, especially in relation to specific information requests or contact, which presently is only through the Coordinators. The question was then, if there would be an added value in WI being able to contact the group members directly and what do the coordinators feel about this?

Discussion Points

MGD- in his view, expertise database and membership database should be made separate and some groups have already tried to categorise their membership, but this is not clear enough.

- The existing member's directory is freely available, but based on what information has been provided by the coordinators. The next plan for this database is to make it interactive and allow members to load their data themselves or at least the coordinators. The database also allows email contact to members, but more

importantly it is hacker free and as far as IUCN SSC is concerned we contact everyone on the database if necessary for example when sending editions of 'Species'. However in more specific issues, we contact the coordinators alone.

DS – For the Wader SG it is bound by UK legislation concerning personal details which cannot be made public without the individuals consent. Therefore this is a constraint to listing its members in this sort of database without first making this explicit to the members concerned.

SP – In terms of contacting SG members, I would propose that WI considers these 3 different situations as a guide for lines of communication with SG members

- 1 – Information - Freely contact all SG members
- 2 – Advice – specific members and copy coordinators
- 3 – Contracts – Coordinators directly

ME- It might be relevant that members are contacted directly to get a feel of their opinion on the direct link with WI and IUCN SSC.

MGD – It might be worth listing some as subscribers of newsletters and categories. This is quite historical.

MGD – It should however be noted that the decision of who is a member is the decision of coordinators.

DT - WI will take advantage and recognise the full range of membership as having equal opportunities in SGs.

Action point:

- *A guidance document outlining how to contact members etc and considering the points raised by SP should be developed by **TO in consultation with all SG coordinators***
- *WI should combine efforts with IUCN SSC on the members' database to make it more efficient. **TO and MGD***
- *Might be relevant to make this database transparent in members listing and make all membership records available and this however should not encourage inactive members. **(All SG coordinators)***
- *It was also proposed that coordinators should take a delegatory approach in terms delegating roles to its membership as a way of motivating the members, for example active communicators within the groups can be focal points to those on the field **(All SG Coordinators)***

10.2 Species Database

DT. Highlighted the importance of sharing data and information especially in cases where such groups manage their own data. Is there a need to see how this can be made easily available or rather managed from one source?

Discussion Points.

The meeting agreed that it is important that such databases are integrated with the more synthesized databases existing in WI & BL. The following are presently groups that manage their own databases: Swan SG, Seaduck SG and Goose SG

Action Points

- *WI is to circulate a document highlighting the needs assessment and rationale for the need for this database to be integrated and managed through a single source and a proposal for follow up should be developed with regards to things to consider in terms of any alteration to the existing models and why we need to have access to them **(WH and SD)***
- *Possibility of a dedicated workshop with these groups on this may be explored **(WH, SD and the relevant group coordinators)***

10.3 Capacity building inputs

The meeting agreed that this was an area where active support and opportunistic approaches need to be adopted, especially in the area of identifying the opportunities and tapping into them; however the purpose needs to be first clearly clarified

Action point:

- *A brainstorming session at the next Specialist Group Coordinators meeting on ‘actual’ needs, potential projects, and how it fits into WI Strategy, was requested, but more importantly this being a participatory approach would be quite useful in stimulating the Groups to be better focussed on important and relevant activities and what specific support role would be required from WI. Output would be a guidance document on priority setting. (TO add as an activity to be undertaken at the next SG Coordinators meeting to ensure the development of the guidance document on priority setting)*
- *Capacity building opportunities for groups should be also explored on a regional basis (should be considered under the funding possibilities by TO, BH and MGD)*

10.4 Project ideas

Led by WH and AS

WH briefly explained or highlighted potential opportunities within the GEF AEWA project for SGs involvement, for example

- The use of sites by the species
- Identification of critical sites
- Knowledge database (training component)

AS speaking for Birdlife International also in her statement regarding potential opportunities within the proposed European Bird trend indicators project and stated that past attempts by Birdlife International to engage with SGs were not encouraging enough in view of low levels of interest shown by SGs, but this would offer another opportunity for Specialist Groups to re-engage on a task basis with Birdlife International and Wetlands International who are also involved in this project. Both speakers then requested for an indication of interest and what expertise the groups would be bringing on board.

Discussion Points

The Cormorants SG agreed that this fits into the group’s area of planned intervention.

The Wader SG agrees that it would incorporate these potential opportunities as a useful topic in the group’s 2005 conference-the group’s engagement likely from 2004.

SP– In the case of the GEF AEWA proposal critical sites - Would the starting point be IBAs and then subsequently all other sites?

DS – In relation to the GEF flyway project - Do you see critical sites as a subset of international important sites? The definition should be approached with caution. It is important that we do not undermine the position that all international important sites for waterbirds are critical sites.

WH – Explained critical sites as functional links in a network of sites that is important in the life cycle of particular species.

Action point:

- *The meeting agreed that these opportunities were far too important to miss and they requested for an update with very clear activities for them prior to the kick off of the projects, in a nutshell, the interest of groups to be involved in these projects was*

clearly indicated. (Interested SG Coordinators and members are to liaise directly with WH and AS for WI and BL respectively)

10.5 Future Specialist Group Meetings:

TO mentioned the request from some coordinators for the annual SG meeting to take into consideration periods when most coordinators are meant to be in the field and the need to move the meetings further away from spring.

Furthermore, some coordinators requested that the meeting location should be rotated, as a way of encouraging more participation and the possibility of a field trip during the meetings should also be explored.

Action point:

- *TO is advised to contact Jean-Paul Taris to explore the possibility of holding the next meeting in Tour du Valat, and the meeting should be planned for after spring preferably early summer before the beginning of holidays.*

11 Fundraising for SG activities

Led by BH

Funding Database – There was no real presentation on this, but BH indicated that it would be good if an opportunity can be created for a break-out session the next time the SG meeting is held. A demo database on funding possibilities was presented by MGD and TO and it was a general feeling in the meeting that the demo on funding possibilities presented by TO and MGD should be reworked to address more SG issues than general fundraising.

Discussion points:

- Need to set up a specialised metadatabase instead of a database, linking funding organizations and important points regarding their funding areas etc.
- The meeting agreed that there is the need to share amongst SGs feedback from sources of funding either negative or positive and therefore should be made self uploading with the possibility of uploading proposal formats
- Negative feedback and reasons for refusal from funding sources should also be reported
- Coordinators agreed in principle to contribute to the development of this metadatabase
- It should be publicly accessible.

Action Points

- *The meeting agreed that TO and MGD are to discuss the metadatabase and a first draft of clear description of what this database would deliver and how Specialist Groups can support it, should be developed and sent to BH for his comments before being sent to other coordinators. TO should keep the new WI Business Development Officer in the loop.*

12 WI Board of Members Meeting and IUCN Congress, November 2004

MGD – Presented draft agenda of the IUCN SSC meeting at the congress and other plans for the IUCN congress and copies were made available to the meeting. He however categorically mentioned that funds are not presently available to support members of the commission including coordinators to attend the congress, but this is still being explored. In terms of leadership of groups for the triennium, he said the present system of WI appointing coordinators while IUCN SSC Chair endorses and acknowledges the

chair/coordinator would be adopted, therefore the choice of coordinators for the shared groups should be discussed between WI and the groups, but he would be willing to make an input for example in the guidelines for nominations document that TO is expected to produce fairly soon.

DT mentioned that nothing specific has been agreed for the IUCN congress in terms of WI representation but this is presently being discussed, he however said it would be relevant to get feedback from coordinators as well on what we could do at the congress, he then promised that as soon as something concrete is planned in this regard, coordinators would be informed.

As per the Wetlands International Board of Members meeting, DT mentioned that some ideas on possible side events which may be relevant to SGs are being received and if any bright ideas are generated in this meeting, they could be considered by the programme development committee for the BoM, he however said that the most important aspect would be the signing off of the new Strategy by the BoM in November.

On the appointment and re-appointments of coordinators, the meeting was informed that the Board has approved the development of a guidance document for the appointment and re-appointment of coordinators and this would if approved be introduced to SGs to help facilitate the nomination of coordinators. He mentioned the importance of this year being the end of a triennium and the beginning of a new one when new coordinators are appointed or incumbent coordinators re-appointed, he however wanted to know if the process of nominations within the groups has its overall membership participation.

In addition to what DT said regarding the appointment of coordinators, TO said, the guidance document would be a document on principles that may be adopted in selecting coordinators and would not form a 'law' precisely.

TO at this point mentioned that, a booklet on reports from all groups over the past 5 years is also proposed for production before the BoM, but it would require the commitment of coordinators to draft text, proof read their sections when the first draft is ready and also to fill in empty gaps regarding their groups.

Discussion points: Regarding a proposal that groups should adopt a democratic process of allowing SG members to nominate and propose their coordinators to WI for appointment especially in view of the present triennium coming to an end in November, 2004. Some SG Coordinators were of the opinion that this may not work for now because most of their members except a few active ones have limited knowledge of WI relationship with their groups, especially the core scientists amongst and may not be in a position of being consulted to pick a lead for the triennium. For other SG Coordinators, a regular election process already existed e.g. WSG is entirely democratic

Action points: -

- ***WI Management team** should check the possibility of inviting the IUCN SSC Chair from November 2004, Holly Dublin to the WI BOM*
- ***TO** to explore the possibility of holding a brief session of new or reconstituted SG coordinators in Bangkok*
- *Feedback to Coordinators on planning for both meetings and specific roles for SGs should be ensured (**TO & MGD**)*
- *Coordinators are to endeavour to promote the WI Board of Members meeting and the IUCN Congress in their network and the strategic opportunities (**All SG Coordinators**)*
- ***TO** is to provide to WI BoD, a guidance framework to help in the appointment of coordinators for the groups and this should be done fairly quickly especially with the upcoming WI BoM.*

13 SG Annual reporting and work plans

TO addressed the meeting on a proposed principle agreement between IUCN SSC and WI on streamlining reporting to both IUCN SSC and WI. Both MGD and TO, are to discuss this further after the meeting. MGD highlighted the need for SGs to be reminded that sometimes when requests come to coordinators, it should be realized that some other SGs exist in the IUCN network without a similar partnership as exists with WI, therefore some of those requests may be more important to such groups with less importance to the waterbird network.

Action Point:

- *TO and MGD are to develop a letter and report format, requesting that reports to WI by SGs should serve the same purpose for IUCN SSC, highlighting the benefit of this idea and sent to the incumbent IUCN SSC Chair, David Bracket for final approval*

14 International meetings

DT briefed the meeting on the opportunity international meetings offer in building networks and promoting work done by the respective groups and its partners as a whole, most especially when participation is coordinated towards addressing crucial scientific issues. Furthermore, he briefed the meeting of upcoming meetings and WI's level of engagement. The STRP Working Groups mid-term workshop (20th -24th July, 2004) and INTECOL conference (25th -30th July, 2004) were some of the major meetings that DT and TO mentioned involving WI at the level of logistic and technical support and purely technical respectively.

Other meetings mentioned by coordinators were:

- Seaducks SG meeting in St Petersburg in 2005
- Flamingo SG workshop in Tunisia Nov 2004 at Pan African Ornithological conference (PAOC). PAOC
- Wader Study Group annual conference 2004

Action point:

- *WH and SD are to check the possibility of flagging WPE at the Pan African Ornithological Conference in November 2004 in Tunisia.*

2005 SG Meeting Date:

The meeting agreed that the possibility of holding its next meeting in 2005 at Tour du Valat should be explored, and the agreed dates were either the last week in June or the first week in July.

15 Any other Business:

SP - What is the status of plans of the planned global IWC committee?

In his response **DS** explained that a kick-off meeting was held in Edinburgh and the key purpose of the committee would be in the area of:

- Strategic advice
- Technical support

He further stated that it may be that separate mechanisms would be needed to deliver these two functions.

Action point:

- *A brief paper would be available to WI in the next couple of weeks regarding global IWC Committee and it would be shared with the SGs coordinators.*

Position of Specialist Group Liaison Officer in Wetlands International

SP requested if WI has any plan to ensure that WI and SG partnership continues to be serviced even after the incumbent SG network development officer's contract ends late this year-

DT in his response replied that the CEO would be in a better position to answer the question; however WI is presently assessing the organisations' capacity and would make adequate arrangements within its capacity to continue appropriate support to SGs, irrespective of who would be responsible for the delivery of the support.

16 Closing

A Feedback regarding the meeting was requested from participants and below are their responses in this regard -

BH – Action focused meeting, and well coordinated.

RH – Well informed of SG activities and operation.

DS – Excellent meeting

SD – Happy about the developing partnership especially with BL

SS – Good science base exhibited

AJ – Good meeting

JK – Smooth meeting

A S – good meeting and better opportunities

M E– Working in one interactive break-out session is important for next year's meeting.

MGD – Good meeting

DT – Everybody being able to link and re-engage with SGs and opportunity for brainstorming for regions would be available e.g. European Strategy workshop

TO- Thanked everyone for their attendance in spite of their busy schedules and is encouraged by the nice feedback from participants, but more importantly, looks forward to implementation of some of the actions agreed to.

The meeting was declared closed at 3.54pm.