

Preliminary announcement of an important conference

“Waterbirds Around the World”

(A global review of conservation, management and research in the world's major waterbird flyways)

3–8 April 2004, Edinburgh, Scotland

Jointly hosted by the Governments of the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, with support from the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention), the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) and many national and international conservation and research organisations.

Over the last 40 years the conservation of waterbirds has received much attention and was one of the driving forces behind the development of the Ramsar Convention in 1971. At a flyway level, The North American Waterfowl Management Plan was a major step forward and inspired similar activities in other parts of the world. One of the latest examples of these is the 1995 African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement. Many other initiatives are in various stages of preparation and implementation including the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, Central Asian Indian Flyway Project and Siberian Crane Flyway Programme.

Many migratory waterbird species have a global distribution. By definition, waterbird migration connects the continents and their conservation and management is a challenge for everybody and depends on good co-operation between people and nations.

Several international conferences have addressed research and conservation of migratory species, but so far there has been no single international meeting reviewing all aspects of waterbird conservation in both a global and flyway context.

“*Waterbirds Around the World*” will focus on all major aspects of waterbird conservation throughout the complete annual cycle including breeding areas, stopover sites and wintering areas. It will appraise the achievements of the past 25 years, identifying gaps in our knowledge and the need for initiatives to stimulate future conservation of the world's flyways and the species and habitats involved.

The conference will:

- review the historical development of migratory waterbird conservation on all continents
- review the present status of all initiatives for waterbird flyway conservation
- present new initiatives for flyway co-operation
- review current research and monitoring, including the study of population dynamics, migration ecology and migration routes, as well as techniques such as ringing and satellite tracking
- provide an overview of the present conservation status of migratory waterfowl and their habitats with special attention to intra-continental migrants and species with nomadic migration patterns
- discuss and evaluate the ways in which mankind values migratory waterbirds (economic, ecological, cultural, traditional)
- present an update on the harvest and sustainable use of waterbirds (subsistence harvest, commercial harvest and recreational harvest)
- provide a platform for discussions and decisions on a global network of defined flyways for each species group.



The conference is intended for all who are active in the conservation of migratory waterbirds (waders/shorebirds, ducks, geese, swans, herons, egrets, cranes, etc.) and seabirds, including individuals, those associated with non-government bodies like universities and conservation organisations, as well as representatives of governments and inter-governmental organisations.

The conference invites participation in overview and syntheses covering such areas as historical developments, flyway conservation, conservation action planning, waterbird migration research, conservation status assessments, sustainable use and monitoring. Although not being a forum for presentation of new results in fundamental research, the conference encourages participants to contribute presentations, posters and syntheses on the conservation of all migratory waterbirds, including seabirds.

The programme will include:

- Plenary sessions in the morning by invited speakers to present details of flyway activities in different parts of the world
- Parallel sessions and workshops in the afternoon on a broad range of issues
- A poster session will be an essential part of the conference
- Round table presentations and discussions during the evenings
- Presentation of flyway-related films and videos in the evenings.

DATES, VENUE AND LOGISTICS

The conference will be held during 3–8 April 2004 at the Heriot-Watt Conference Centre, Edinburgh, Scotland, which has a capacity for up to 500 participants. The conference language will be English.

The First Announcement with more detailed information, call for papers and registration form and further information on organisations and experts involved will be distributed about September/October 2002. Please contact Dr Gerard C. Boere for a preliminary registration to receive the First Announcement or for further information on the substance and programme of the conference:

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