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FOURTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS (AEWA)
12-13 MAY 2003, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR PILOT STUDY/ REVIEW OF POTENTIAL FROM WATERBIRD RINGING RECOVERY ANALYSES FOR THE AGREEMENT AREA

INTRODUCTION

In the previous International Implementation Plan (IIP) as well as in the current one for 2003-2007 a pilot study/ review of the potential from waterbird ringing recovery analyses for the Agreement Area has been listed as a priority.

The brief description of the project as laid down in the IIP makes clear that over the last half century ringing schemes particularly in Europe have amassed hundreds of thousands of recoveries of ringed birds. The data of these recoveries is yielding potential new information on migration and life histories of the species concerned. This study is a prelude to a major analysis of waterbird ringing recoveries that need to take place. The strategy for undertaking an analysis of this enormous valuable resource in such a way that its potential is fully utilized, needs to be carefully planned. A key objective of this pilot study is to develop this strategy, in collaboration with all stakeholders who desire to be involved in the full analysis.

PROPOSAL OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat requests the Technical Committee to review the current proposal and give to guidance on how to proceed on this matter. The funds needed for this project are 50 % secured through a voluntary contribution received. Additional funds are needed and the Secretariat would welcome any support or guidance on how to secure the remaining US \$ 25,000.

AEWA Priority 19

PILOT STUDY/ REVIEW OF POTENTIAL FROM WATERBIRD RINGING RECOVERY ANALYSES FOR THE AGREEMENT AREA

INTRODUCTION

This pilot study is a prelude to a major analysis of waterbird ringing recoveries that needs to take place. The volume of ringing recovery data for waterbirds is vast. The strategy for undertaking an analysis of this enormously valuable resource in such a way that its potential fully utilized, needs to be carefully planned. The magnitude of the full analysis is huge, and it must involve as many role-players and stake-holders as possible. A key objective of this pilot study is to develop this strategy, in collaboration with all stakeholders who desire to be involved in the full analysis.

Project description and objective

- To determine the volumes and locations of waterbird ringing recovery data,
- To undertake an exploratory analysis of the approaches needed to exploit the vast amount of existing ringing recovery data for waterbirds;
- To demonstrate the efficacy of these approaches by applying them to an exemplar set of species;
- To plan a strategy for the full analysis of this database, which will involve many stakeholders;
- To provide guidelines for future waterbird ringing strategies, where the concept of ringing will be expanded to include all forms of devices that uniquely identify individual birds: numbered metal rings, unique combinations of colour rings and individually engraved colour rings, satellite tracking devices, etc.

Scope

Geographic: The AEWA Agreement Area

Taxonomic: All species included within the Agreement

Time scale: 18 months

Work plan

As much progress as possible will be made using email and the Internet. All reports will be made available as pdf files on both the ADU and AEWA websites. Where absolutely necessary, project staff will travel to meet key people face to face. As far as possible, meetings of stakeholders in the project will be timed to coincide with meetings/conferences which many will in any event attend: e.g. EURING Technical Conference, European Ornithologists' Union Conference (Chemnitz, August 2003), EURING Council Meetings, Global Waterbird Flyway Conference (April 2004), etc. Some assistance with travel costs may be provided to enable key people to attend both the meeting of stakeholders and also the associated conference taking place at the same time.

Months 1 to 3: Establish links with EURING and with all ringing schemes within the AEWA Agreement Area. Obtain commitment from as many of these schemes as possible to co-operate. Cooperation with EURING is crucial for the success of this project. Establish other stakeholders in the project; these will include organizations such as Wetlands International, BirdLife International, CIC and other relevant NGOs, conservation managers of sites supporting migratory waterbirds, biological researchers with an interest in migration and the life history strategies of migrant waterbirds, statistical researchers with an interest in the relevant methods of data analysis.

Months 2 to 18: Establish a Steering Committee, representative of all interested stakeholders, which will guide the development of the strategy and budget for the full analysis. In collaboration with the Steering Committee, and in parallel with the results obtained from the other phases of the project, develop a comprehensive strategy for the full analysis of the database, including which stakeholders would accept responsibility for different components of the analysis, and establish a budget for what this analysis will cost.

Months 2 to 4: For each ringing scheme, via a questionnaire survey, find out how many birds of each species of interest have been ringed and recovered. Determine this historical information on an annual basis if possible. Find out the format in which the data stored (paper/electronic) and whether this information is recorded in the EURING database. Find out what additional information is recorded for each bird.

Months 5 to 9: Undertake an analysis of the questionnaires received. Tabulate results. Produce an interim report. Use this to follow up any outstanding ringing schemes, which have not submitted information. Determine which species should be used for exemplar analyses (possibly one shorebird, one tern, one gull, one duck, etc).

Months 7 to 11: Consider the analysis possibilities. Produce a report on the potential methods that could be applied to describe movements, survival and other life history parameters that can be deduced from the available ringing recovery data.

Months 9 to 18: Obtain as much recovery data as possible from EURING and other ringing schemes for the species selected for the exemplar analyses. Undertake these analyses and produce results in the form of reports and papers in the scientific journals.

Months 12 to 18: Develop recommendations and guidelines for the conduct of future ringing projects, and produce a report. For this phase of the project, the concept of ringing will be expanded to include all forms of devices that uniquely identify individual birds. Consider how ringing activities can be expanded to become monitoring programmes. Consider how ringing activities can be dovetailed into waterbird census activities.

Staffing

The project will require one full-time research officer for 18 months. From month nine onwards there are two or three activities running in parallel, and a second full time research officer will be needed for the final nine months of the project. We envisage that these research officers be MSc or even recent PhD graduates. The half-time assistant will be needed for the full 18 months for data entry, clerical support, website management, arranging meetings with stakeholders, etc.

Budget

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| Two full time research officers for a total of 27 months, at R90 000 per year | R203 000 |
| Half-time research officer/clerical assistant for 18 months, at R30 000 per year | R45 000 |
| Project management within ADU (6% of staff salaries) | R15 000 |
| Computing equipment (three PCs, one printer) and other hardware | R27 000 |
| Travel and transport | R40 000 |
| Desk Top Publishing and Printing | R35 000 |
| Running expenses (photocopying, postage, telephone, stationery, etc) | R40 000 |
| Office space, electricity, internet access and associated infrastructure | R45 000 |
| TOTAL | R450 000 |

At an exchange rate of SAR9 = US\$1, this is equivalent to approximately US\$50 000.