

A photograph of a beach with several Northern Bald Ibises. In the foreground, one ibis is bent over, drinking from a shallow pool of water. Other ibises are scattered across the sand, some standing and some looking towards the camera. The background shows the ocean with waves and a few people walking on the beach under a clear sky.

# Northern Bald Ibis Conservation and Reintroduction workshop

**2<sup>nd</sup> IAGNBI Meeting  
Vejer 2006**



**Eds. C. Boehm, C.G.R. Bowden, M. Jordan, C. King**

# Northern Bald Ibis Conservation and Reintroduction Workshop

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## Proceedings of the International Advisory Group for the Northern Bald Ibis (IAGNBI) meeting Vejer, Spain September 2006

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**Eds. Boehm, C., Bowden, C.G.R.; M. Jordan & C. King**

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## Proposed review points for the 1<sup>st</sup> Species Action Plan for the Northern Bald Ibis (AEWA, 2006) – Updates agreed at 2<sup>nd</sup> IAGNBI meeting, Vejer 2006



The 1<sup>st</sup> Northern Bald Ibis Species Action Plan (SAP) was published in June 2006, as output from the Madrid meeting, January 2004. Given the significant advances and developments in the two and a half years since that meeting, and the opportunity that the IAGNBI meeting presents, we agreed that proposing SAP updates would be a valuable exercise. The SAP lists the main threats for adult and juvenile birds, breeding success and priority activities needed in the countries where the last wild Northern Bald Ibis occur. Updates to this document are seen to be entirely appropriate for a working document such as an SAP inevitably should be.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> IAGNBI meeting held in Vejer de la Frontera during the 27<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October in 2006 the following comments, additions and revisions were made, and this report will be presented to AEWA for consideration to formalise these updates. We have also taken this opportunity to add some detail to the output from the original meeting, where time simply ran out for some of the later activities. In these cases it is more a case of adding the Agencies etc rather than any fundamental changes. In a limited number of cases, a comment is recorded below the activity, even where the text has otherwise not changed. These are for cases where particular emphasis was agreed upon.

**ACTIVITIES (P. 37 in the NBI SAP):** Activities which should be taken to conserve the wild Northern Bald Ibis population (**Morocco, Syria, Turkey**, wintering areas: **Yemen, Saudi Arabia Ethiopia**, and potential countries: **Algeria**) – [note the new countries added here]

### 5. A comprehensive health screening conducted on all birds prior to reintroduction or release (in all countries, even within Europe). \*\*\*

| Activity   | Agencies   | Timescale | Cost |
|--|--|-----------|------|
| 5.1 To establish a protocol of health screening for Northern Bald Ibis prior to reintroduction or release  |  |           |      |
|  | IAGNBI, IOZ, Jerez Zoo, Veterinary Institutions.     |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 5.5 Any birds transferred to aviaries at experimental release project sites must also undergo full health screening, even if not destined for release. |  |           |      |
|  | IAGNBI, IOZ, Jerez Zoo, Veterinary Institutions, all | Ongoing   |      |

|  |           |  |  |
|--|-----------|--|--|
|  | projects. |  |  |
|--|-----------|--|--|

**7. A captive population maintained with health, inbreeding and age structure managed \*\*\***

| Activity   | Agencies                             | Timescale | Cost |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| 7.4 Investigate other Northern Bald Ibis holders for the Eastern population and include these and Birecik birds within an organised international breeding programme framework | EAZA, IAGNBI, DD, Zoos (Ankara, ...) | 2007      |      |

**8. The conservation of the Northern Bald Ibis through international coordination and cooperation promoted by the International Advisory Group for the Northern Bald Ibis (IAGNBI)**

| Activity   | Agencies                               | Timescale  | Cost |
|--|--|------------|------|
| 8.1 To obtain the endorsement of AEWA and other appropriate bodies for IAGNBI as the designated lead coordinating body.  | IAGNBI, AEWA, IUCN SSC, BirdLife, RSPB | Ongoing    | *    |
| <b>Comment</b> – AEWA will forward its terms of reference to IAGNBI in order to confirm whether IAGNBI can work within these as the implementing partner for the SAP. It was noted that currently Syria and Algeria are an AEWA signatory, Morocco is hoping to become so soon, but Turkey, Yemen, and Ethiopia are not. |  |            |      |
| 8.2 To maintain IAGNBI as both a group of technical experts and governmental representatives from all current and future range states of the Northern Bald Ibis.   | IAGNBI                                 | Ongoing    | *    |
| <b>Comment</b> – IAGNBI was expanded to include the new countries considered to be of relevance in light of new information, Algeria, Yemen, Ethiopia, and appropriate representation will be included on the committee as needed.   |  |            |      |
| 8.3 IAGNBI to promote the development of National Northern Bald Ibis action plans where appropriate  | IAGNBI                                 | March 2006 | **   |
| <b>Comment</b> - National action plans, MOR expected to be first, end of 2006 or soon after.   |  |            |      |

**10. Risk of infection disease reduced \*\*\***

| Activity  | Agencies  | Timescale | Cost |
|---|---|-----------|------|
| 10.1 Veterinary / post-mortem protocol assured for any sick or dead bird.   |   |           |      |
| <b>Comment</b> – protocols exist but are not always strictly adhered to   |   |           |      |
|   | IAGNBI, IOZ, Jerez Zoo, veterinary institutions |           |      |
| 10.6 Douira poultry unit relocated  |   |           |      |
| <b>Comment</b> – In light of the recent H5NI Avian Influenza outbreaks the Poultry farm in SM poses an increased hazard to the future of the NBI. |   |           |      |
|   | PNSM  |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 10.7 Investigate which zoos have vaccinated their NBI and collate details of vaccines used and data on immunity inferred.             |   |           |      |
|   | IOZ, EEP, vet inst.,                            |           |      |

|  |                                   |  |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
|  | Min of Environment & Forestry (T) |  |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|

### 11. Risk of intoxication to be reduced \*\*\* (Morocco, Syria, Turkey)

| Activity  | Agencies   | Timescale         | Cost    |
|---|--|-------------------|---------|
| 11.1 Local farmers questioned about use of pesticides.  |  |                   |         |
| <b>Comment:</b> Morocco / Algeria / Turkey: local farmers and supplies survey about use of pesticides and a list of products should be compiled (will reduce costs and time needed for testing if incident occurs)                |  |                   |         |
|   | PNSM, RSPB<br>MLAE, SSWC,<br>ICARDA<br>Min of Environment & Forestry, IOZ, vet. Inst.                                  | 2006<br>July 2006 | *<br>** |
| 11.2 Meetings with farmers, teachers, etc .to raise awareness of risks of pesticides used and demonstrate safe application methods.   |  |                   |         |
|   | PNSM, RSPB<br>MLAE, SSWC,<br>Min of Environment & Forestry, IOZ,<br>DD, Min. of Agriculture, MIN,<br>EAV, FOR, DD, AGR | 2006<br>July 2006 | **      |
| 11. 5 Maintain water-provisioning points near colonies (Morocco <b>and Syria</b> ). [note inconsistent numbering in original document between countries could cause confusion here]   |  |                   |         |
|   | PNSM,<br>MLAE, MAAR,<br>veterinary institutions  | March 2006        | *       |
| <b>NEW:</b> 11.8. Locust plagues - disaster plan needed (e.g. Control of that area by PNSM itself) – and considered for Syria and Turkey. List which locust control pesticides could be used, which would be most harmful for NBI |  |                   |         |
|   | PNSM, MAAR, DD,<br>Min of Env. (T)   |                   |         |
| <b>NEW</b> 11.9. Investigate the use of compensatory payments for reduction of pesticide use in and around NBI foraging sites in Turkey (Turkey)  |  |                   |         |
|   | DD, Min of Env. (T)  |                   |         |

### 15. Buildings on or near to NBI breeding and feeding sites restricted. \*\*\*\*

| Activity   | Agencies | Timescale | Cost |
|--|----------|-----------|------|
| 15.1. Stop illegal constructions of grottos at or near breeding and roosting sites   |          |           |      |
| <b>Comment:</b> - Buildings are effectively prohibited at current colonies in Morocco but further support from the authorities is required to enforce this crucially important protection. |          |           |      |
| 15.3 Develop a management plan for Tamri and Palmyra including for potential breeding sites in partnership with local communities.   |          |           |      |

|  |  |      |     |
|--|--|------|-----|
|  | MAAR, MLAE,<br>SSCW, BLI / BLME,<br>FIRDOS | 2006 | **  |
| 15.4 Initiate training and provide equipment for staff to implement management plans.  |  |      |     |
| <b>Comment</b> – community participation is the key to effective protection. Tamri protection status management plan needed—protected area |  |      |     |
|  | MAAR, MLAE,<br>SSCW, BLI / BLME            | 2006 | *** |
| <b>NEW:</b> 15.5 Manage location of nomadic settlements around the Palmyra colony (Syria)  |  |      |     |
|  | MAAR, MLAE,<br>SSCW, BLI / BLME,<br>FIRDOS | 2006 | **  |

**17. Agriculture and grazing regimes maintained/alterd to provide suitable feeding areas \*\*\*\***

| Activity  | Agencies                            | Timescale | Cost |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.4. Investigate land-use history of favoured feeding sites (All)  |                                     |           |      |
|   | PNSM, DD, RSPB,<br>SEO, MLAE, MAAR, |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.5. Educate farmers in the land use of the feeding sites, compatible with NBI needs<br><b>Comment:</b> Working with communities is key to maintain sustainable land use |                                     |           |      |
|   | PNSM, DD, RSPB,<br>SEO, MLAE, MAAR, |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.6. Full support of local authorities needed to control the grazing activities of Western Sahara bussed in animals. (Morocco – Souss Massa)                             |                                     |           |      |
|   | PNSM, SEO                           |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.7. Encourage active management to improve and expand existing feeding sites  |                                     |           |      |
|   | PNSM, DD, RSPB,<br>SEO, MLAE, MAAR, |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.8. Document and map feeding areas (all, except Morocco), highlighting those regularly and intensively used.  |                                     |           |      |
|   | DD, RSPB, SEO,<br>MLAE, MAAR,       |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.9. Evaluate the economic output of the areas which are used by the NBI   |                                     |           |      |
|   | PNSM, DD, RSPB,<br>SEO, MLAE, MAAR, |           |      |
| <b>NEW:</b> 17.10 Investigate the feasibility of a labelling scheme to highlight produce from NBI friendly land.  |                                     |           |      |
|   | PNSM, DD, RSPB,<br>SEO, MLAE, MAAR, |           |      |

**21. Disturbance by military firing range reduced.** (suggested for MOR – Souss-Massa\*) - not fully discussed at first meeting, **but agreed here and recommended action to move firing range. Propose changing it to 21. Serious disturbance reduced**

| Activity   | Agencies | Timescale | Cost |
|--|----------|-----------|------|
| <b>NEW:</b> 21.1. Disturbance by firing range within PNSM reduced by relocating firing range |          |           |      |

|  |                                     |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
|  | PNSM, SEO, RSPB,<br>IAGNBI          |  |  |
| <b>NEW: 21.2.</b> Disturbance by human access and irregular activities to the breeding and feeding sites reduced. Wardens in the feeding/ breeding area for humans (including “birders”) |                                     |  |  |
|  | PNSM, DD, RSPB,<br>SEO, MLAE, MAAR, |  |  |

**NEW: 22. Develop a contingency plan to prepare for catastrophic events affecting NBI mortality or breeding.**

| Activity   | Agencies                         | Timescale | Cost |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|------|
| <b>NEW: 22.1</b> Syria supplementation (see workshop report chapter 4)                                 |                                  |           |      |
|  | IAGNBI, MAAR, DD,<br>RSPB, BLME, |           |      |
| <b>NEW: 22.1</b> Avian flu   |                                  |           |      |
|  | All incl. Vet<br>institutions    |           |      |
| <b>NEW: 22.3.</b> Disaster fund needed, organisations which could help                                 |                                  |           |      |
|  | IAGNBI                           |           |      |
| <b>NEW: 22.4</b> Locust plague if current precautions not effective in preventing major ibis mortality |                                  |           |      |
|  | PNSM, other?                     |           |      |
| <b>NEW: 22.5.</b> Captive population (back up) for Syria and Souss Massa                               |                                  |           |      |

**NEW: 23: Action plan tables should be produced for Yemen, Ethiopia and Algeria. Potential threats must be identified in the new countries (Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia). \*\*\***

**Note: Breeding information table (SAP NBI p.13) needs to be updated to include Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Ethiopia as non-breeding visitor countries, with relevant months assigned (July, July-August, August-February respectively).** These countries are not an AEWA signatory. Their recruitment should be an activity in the respective action plans.

For the following two results, we wish to put on record that there were lengthy discussions on whether we should increase the priority to \*\*\*, and although this was not a clear conclusion, at least some record of this is felt relevant.

**4. The level of genetic variation within the captive, semi-wild and wild populations assessed \*\***

**9. Techniques for the establishment of new colonies by reintroduction investigated \*\***

#### Acronyms

|      |  |
|------|--|
| AEWA | Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds |
| BLI  | BirdLife International   |
| BLME | BirdLife Middle EAST   |
| DD   | Doğa Derneği Society (BirdLife Turkey)                                 |
| EAV  |  |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| EAZA     | European Association for Zoos and Aquaria                                    |
| EEP      | European Endangered Species Program  |
| FIRDOS   | Fund for integrated Rural Development of Syria                               |
| FOR      |  |
| ICARDA   | International Center for Agricultural research in the Dry Areas              |
| IAGNBI   | International Advisory Group for the Northern Bald Ibis                      |
| IOZ      | Institute of Zoology (research division of the Zoological Society of London) |
| IUCN SSC | The World Conservation Union Species Survival Commission                     |
| MAAR     | Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria                           |
| MLAE     | Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment , Turkey                           |
| PNSM     | Parc National Souss- Massa, Morocco  |
| RSPB     | The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; United Kingdom                |
| SEO      | Sociedad Española de Ornitología, Spain                                      |
| SSWC     | Syrian Society for Conservation of Wildlife, Syria                           |

## Reference

JIMENEZ ARMESTO, M.J., BOEHM, C. & BOWDEN, C. (Compilers, 2006): International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*. AEWA Technical, Series No. 10. Bonn, Germany.