



Colloquium

on scientific and strategic aspects of the conservation of Aquatic Warblers

15 October 2009

by invitation of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Venue: The RSPB, UK Headquarters
The Lodge, Sandy, SG19 2DL, Bedfordshire, UK
meeting room: Osprey 2

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Aim of the workshop:

The aim of the meeting is to bring together international experts from the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (AWCT) with relevant staff from RSPB research and species conservation to present and discuss scientific work done to date, and to discuss ways forward for additional research and potential new and unconventional approaches to species recovery for the highly threatened and isolated Pomeranian Aquatic Warbler population, and for the identification of the species' African wintering grounds.

Invited participants:

From outside the RSPB:

- Martin Flade (chairman of the AWCT, Landesumweltamt Brandenburg)
- Franziska Tanneberger (Greifswald University/Germany, recently finished PhD on habitat selection and conservation of AW in Pomerania)
- Cosima Tegetmeyer (Greifswald University/Germany, currently working on PhD on habitat selection and conservation of AW in Senegal)
- Jochen Bellebaum (NABU-BL Germany, project manager for new project focusing on the protection of AW in the last German breeding site)
- Michal Maniakowski (OTOP-BL Poland, project officer of the LIFE Project on AW in Poland and Germany)

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From within the RSPB:

- Rhys Green (Principal Research Biologist and Professor of Conservation Science)
- David Gibbons (Head of Conservation Science)
- Juliet Vickery (Head of International Research)
- Paul Donald (Principal Conservation Scientist)
- Graeme Buchanan (Senior Conservation Scientist)
- Steffen Opper (Conservation Scientist)
- Andy Evans (Head of Species Recovery Unit)
- Nicola Crockford (International Species Conservation Officer)
- Sarah Sanders (Global Country Programme Manager)
- Norbert Schäffer (Head of European Programmes and Int. Biodiversity Policy Dpt.)
- Lars Lachmann (European Country Programme Officer)
- Graham Madge (PR department, mainly during working lunch)

Not available:

- Geoff Welch (International Management Plans Adviser)
- Chris Bowden (International Species Recovery Officer)
- Alex Hipkiss (Global Country Programme Officer)

PROGRAMME:

- 9.15: start
- 12.45: working lunch, incl. Graham Madge from the RSPB PR Department
- 13.30: re-start
- 17.00: end

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- Welcome and introduction of participants (Norbert Schäffer)

Input sessions:

After each presentation, there is a chance for a short spontaneous discussion. Any relevant points will be kept for further discussion during the output sessions.

The Pomeranian population

- Presentation: Aquatic Warbler world population – an overview (Martin Flade, 20 min)
- Presentation: Aquatic Warbler in Pomerania: habitat requirements and management recommendations, results of PhD study (Franziska Tanneberger, 30 min)

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- Presentation: Current work to save the Pomeranian population: The Aquatic Warbler LIFE Project (Lars Lachmann, 20 min)
- Presentation: Conservation work in Germany's last Aquatic Warbler breeding site (Jochen Bellebaum, 10 min)

The wintering grounds

- Presentation: Summary of what we know to date about the wintering grounds of the Aquatic Warbler and how we plan to find out more (Martin Flade, 20 min)
- Presentation: Identifying wintering sites using remote sensing (Graeme Buchanan, 15 min)
- Presentation: Answering questions about the wintering distribution of Aquatic Warblers using isotope analyses of feathers (Steffen Opiel, 5 min)
- Presentation: Habitat use by and threats for the Aquatic Warbler at its only confirmed wintering site, the Djoudj area in Senegal, interim results of PhD study (Cosima Tegetmeyer, 20 min)
- Presentation: Results of the study on the genetic diversity of the global population, the genetic structure of the Djoudj birds and assignment to the known breeding populations" (Martin Flade, based on diploma thesis of Anna-Luise Vogel, 15 min)

LUNCH BREAK, incl. meeting with Graham Madge from RSPB PR Dpt.

RSPB experience

- Presentation: RSPB approach to species recovery, theory and some examples (Andy Evans, 45 min)

Output sessions:

- Thinking out of the box: potential new approaches besides site-based habitat management for saving the Pomeranian population of the Aquatic Warbler (discussion, brainstorming, 120 min)

The following items should be discussed during this session (person in brackets could give short introduction to the topic):

- The genetics of the Pomeranian population: genetically separate? Inbreeding depression? (Martin Flade)
- tape luring of birds to restored areas of suitable habitat (Franziska Tanneberger)?

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- building a habitat/population bridge to the core population in Eastern Poland (stepping-stone approach)?
- release of birds bred in captivity, release of birds from other populations? What genetic information must be available, what techniques are available?
- Developing a population model: which data are available, which still needed? How can we use existing ring data to build a population model? (Jochen Bellebaum)
- How to increase survival/site fidelity?
- Discussion: potential new approaches for identifying the remaining wintering sites (40 min)

The following items should be discussed during this session:

- Use of light-level geolocators (Martin Flade)
- Use of one-signal satellite transmitters (Franziska Tanneberger)
- Strontium isotope-analysis (Paul Donald)

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