

Proceedings of the Specialist Groups Meeting 18-19 April 2002, Wageningen, The Netherlands

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions: Specialist Group Support Officer – Tunde Ojei
2. Matters arising from November 2000 and December 2001 meetings
3. Briefing on changes within Wetlands International and the implications for Specialist Groups, including the nomination of technical and geographical focal points amongst staff of Wetlands International
4. Strategy 2002-2005 – objectives and targets, and proposed work plans of Specialist Groups. Proposed Science Plan 2002-2004
5. Wetlands International – Specialist Group Partnership
6. Triennial Reporting 1999-2001
7. Waterbird Population Estimates – SG involvement and production of WPE3 for Ramsar COP8, forward plans for WPE4, and Red List reviews
8. Network development and support, including Memoranda of Understanding / Agreement Specialist Groups
9. Science support to Ramsar Convention and other key environmental treaties and agreements
10. Any other business

Attendance List:

Present:

Bart Ebbinge	Goose SG
Baz Hughes	Threatened Waterfowl SG
Gerard Boere	Waders SG (Staff WI)
Gilles Deplanque	Waterfowl Harvest SG
Yves Ferrand	Woodcock and Snipe SG
Max Finlayson	Wetlands Inventory and Monitoring SG
Jan, Beekman	Swan SG
Alan Johnson	Flamingo SG
Joseph Kerekes	Diver/ Loon SG
Roberto, Schlatter	Swan SG (Neotropics)
Stefan Pihl	Seaduck SG
Wim van Den Bossche	Stork / Spoonbill / Ibis SG

In attendance:

Chris Baker, WI, Staff
Simon Delany, WI, Staff (SD)
Scott Frazier, WI, Staff
Niels Gillisen, WI, Staff
Mariano Gimenez-Dixon, IUCN Species Programme
Ward Hagemeijer WI, Staff
Taej Mundkur, WI Staff
Simon Nash, WI Staff (First session)
Tunde Ojei, WI Staff

Marcel Silvius, WI Staff
Alison Stattersfield, Birdlife International, UK
Douglas Taylor, WI Staff (DT)

Notes of Proceedings

1.1 Welcome and introductions

The newly appointed Specialist Group Network and Development Support Officer, Tunde Ojei, was introduced.

1.2 Briefing on changes within Wetlands International and the implications for Specialist Groups

Simon Nash introduced the recent changes to Wetlands International and the key outcomes of the 2001 Board of Members Meeting. He presented the recent history leading up to the changes and highlighted the organisational structure and responsible focal points for Specialist Groups to engage with.

Stakeholder review and consultation

- September 2000: Stakeholder review
- November 2000: Board of Directors consider results from review
- December 2001: - 1st draft of Position paper circulated for comment
- Jan 01 to March 01 - Regional Consultation
- April-01 Board of Directors
- May 01- Members news
- Regional consultations
- Nov 01 – Board of Members Meeting and decisions

Stakeholder Review Results

- The need for a clear, focused strategy
- Better delivery of global programmes
- Provision of better support to global programmes
- Improved engagement with partners
- Greater internal discipline, accountability and professionalism
- Better use of resources

Stakeholder messages (Motivators for change)

- The need to prevent major problems and consequent upheavals experienced recently in the Asia Pacific region, the Americas and now the Africa, Europe, Middle East.
- The need for better regional input from Wetlands International Stakeholder groups.
- The need for more effective and transparent communication internally and externally.
- The need for a better resources base to avoid opportunistic programme development.
- The need to clearly define the roles of governance and staff
- Governance must have the right blend of skills to advise and provide appropriate guidance.
- Governance arrangements must be simplified. The ratio of staff to governance was nearly 2:1 and to service these bodies costs the organisation an average US\$ 60,000 per annum.
- The Board of Members must be re-engaged
- The decision making process must be streamlined to ensure effective and timely implementation.
- The networks (Specialist Groups and other experts) must be more formally involved in the programme development of the organisation.

The Board of Members – Decisions (taken at the November/December 2001 meeting)

- Board of Members to become the supreme decision making body of Wetlands International - agree and review the strategy
- The 3 Regional Councils to close
- A strengthened skills based Board of Directors (elected by the BoM) to be responsible for day to day governance and oversight
- Programme and Science Review Committees created within the BoD
- All staff to be accountable to the Board of Directors through the International Director

Impact of change. These changes will:

- Enhance ownership
- Encourage greater engagement from partners and stakeholders
- Streamline decision making
- Enhance co-ordination of programmes
- Improve interaction with and support to Conventions
- Ensure accountability

What does this mean for Specialist Groups?

- Re-engagement of groups at global level through the Board of Members and Board of Directors
- Re-engagement globally and regionally through the Programme and Science Review Committees of the Board of Directors
- Better interaction with Strategic development - one single unifying strategy to enable groups to engage with WI programmes
- The Strategy provides for an integrated approach to wetland and species conservation work
- Better connection to WI staff through **Programme Leaders/Focal Points**

BUT WHO ARE THESE PROGRAMME LEADERS?

Focal Point - Wetland Species Conservation, Gerard Boere



Focal Point -Wetland Inventory, Assessment and Monitoring Doug Taylor



Focal Point - Wise Use, Marcel Silvius



Focal Point – Capacity Building, Taej Mundkur



1.3 Matters arising from November 2000 and December 2001 meetings

Doug Taylor introduced the report of the November 2000 Workshop and highlighted the Actions recommended. In particular, the past poor communications had been improved and WI had taken seriously the need to engage with SGs through mutually shared interests and tasks.

Stefan Pihl agreed that WI had managed to communicate better and had provided forward plans. Decision making process OK. However, there have been poor science questions, not well followed up

Alan Johnson feared that widely dispersed members of the Flamingo SG did not allow for a real Group approach to issues raised by WI. This was agreed to be a generic problem with small SGs

Stefan Pihl raised the problem of volunteers and motivation. It was noted that IUCN-SSC has undertaken a Voluntarism Study, which provides a review of possible actions.

1.4 Strategy 2002-2005 – objectives and targets

Doug Taylor presented the draft Strategy for Wetlands International. As discussed above, the Strategy 2002-2005 has four technical programmes:

1. Wetland Species Conservation
2. Wetland Inventory Assessment and Monitoring
3. Wise Use
4. Capacity Building

Each Programme has declared Objectives to be reached within the life of the Strategy, and to deliver these, Programme Action Plans are being developed with specific targets and time allocation by staff members. It is envisaged that Specialist Groups through their Co-ordinators will consider co-working with staff to contribute towards achievement of targets. This assumption should be tested through the declared work plan of each Specialist Group. Specialist Groups are invited to participate in development and delivery of the work. Funding for the work will be raised under the co-ordination of each Programme leader.

Further details of the Strategy can be found on the Wetlands International website at <http://www.wetlands.org/aboutWI/strategy.htm>.

1.5 Specialist Group briefings and proposed work plans

Specialist Group Co-ordinators presented their views on issues and on work important to their SG and WI. Where presentations were provided in writing or as slides, these are made available on the website at <http://www.wetlands.org/networks/SGroups.htm>. The key points from each presentation and the following discussion are provided below for each Specialist Group that participated in the Meeting.

1.5.1 Seaduck Specialist Group – Stefan Pihl

Networks need the sharing of interests, through regular meetings, which is strength of the Seaduck SG. He recommended that all waterbird SGs form a Waterbird Flyway Group. Issues of concern are the mass deaths of Eiders, including reproduction problems. Activities undertaken include production of the EU Stellers Eider Action Plan; website of the Seaduck SG. Some of the work is delegated, e.g. the members list is managed in Latvia.

Plans for the next 3 years are to hold two more meetings and to publish the proceedings. To be more proactive within the network, hold at least two meetings over the next 3 years and publish results. The SG would also in collaboration with WI obtain funding for its activities.

The group presently has 100 active members spread over Europe, North America and quite a few in Asia. The SG is also looking into ways of globalising its scope especially in East Asia, but this requires substantial funding. A group meeting of the North America is planned for Vancouver, Canada in November 2003.

The meeting suggested that the Seaducks group should look more into a regional grouping compared to global. On database, the meeting agreed on the importance of the work of this group which is very likely to be useful in a couple of years in the CIBA (Coastal IBAs) development by Birdlife International as well as integrating this into other bird related database. The group was then asked to make this database available to WI for its incorporation into existing databases.

Other Discussion points:

Group membership was stated to be 40-50 active with about 100 centred in Europe and some in North America. There is one co-ordinator in North America. The Group aims to become global, but may not actively engage in global work. The Group can assist setting up local regional Groups.

On liaison between databases, the Group has difficulties identifying open sea based "sites", but agrees that it is willing to co-operate over data comparison with BirdLife and WI.

1.5.2 Diver/Loon Specialist Group – Joe Kerekes

The most recent Newsletter of the group focuses on current banding / ringing projects of loons in North America and Europe. Another edition is expected in 2002 with a status report on long term monitoring of loons in North America and Europe.

Presently monitoring programmes are done independently of each other, but the SG intends to develop a common purpose for these programmes.

Joe seized the opportunity to request support from WI to enable effective loon monitoring programmes as a way of obtaining scientifically valid population estimates, population trends and habitat use by loons globally. He linked this to WI's Programme objective 5.1.1 on Wetland Biodiversity Conservation. He then elaborated that this support would provide focus and prestige to this co-ordinated Diver/ Loon monitoring project, as a way of stimulating the enthusiasm of the numerous volunteer organisations conducting the individual monitoring projects.

Presently, there are about 600 members and 2000 volunteers. He highlighted a poor network with E/ Asia and requested for WI to facilitate this, at this point, Taej raised the Communication /Language as an obstacle to poor Asian representation and he also emphasised that most existing networks in Asia are general waterbird experts, rather than species. The meeting agreed on the need to develop a global SG database, and the SGs should also try to create new contacts.

Forward planning: Loon monitoring is proposed, especially in North America, and it is proposed that the SG could provide leadership and co-ordination to achieve:

- Population estimates
- Population trends
- Habitat use

The SG needs commitment and support from Wetlands International to raise prestige and to allow the Group to raise the necessary resources.

Discussion points

The need for loon scientists in Asia was identified, and the Group is encouraged to set up a members directory on the web to make the specialists accessible.

1.5.3 Goose Specialist Group – Bart Ebbinge

There are 400 members, and the key products include the Goose Database, and proceedings of meetings, including the 6th. The next conference is proposed for Donãã, Spain in December focussing on impact of hunting on goose populations. The group enjoys well-established link with other groups working on geese e.g. Japan and North America.

Major achievement of the Group is a joint publication by members giving an overview of European view of wintering geese population and research. The group maintains a goose database. A membership database is maintained in collaboration with Wetlands International.

Discussion points:

Economic values of geese and harvesting impacts should be studied, but a workplan is needed. The need for Group input in South America was noted. However, local members through a Task Force should make this.

1.5.4 Woodcock and Snipe Specialist Group – Yves Ferrand

The SG supports the use of the WI Strategy and proposes a programme of activities to deliver results on monitoring activities.

The new Co-ordinator of this group, Yves Ferrand made a presentation report highlighting the main objective of the group as Developing and maintaining knowledge of the status, threats and trends with a special effort during the breeding period of this waterbird species.

Their major species focus is on the Eurasian woodcock, in view of its importance as quarry species and the Jacksnipe due to its poor knowledge and vulnerable conservation status. He mentioned that there exists 7 species of Woodcock globally and 18 species of Snipes. He went further to distinguish sub objectives for the identified species, in the case of the Eurasian woodcock, he identified the objective in the area of data collection on distribution, trends and hunting bags with a focus on breeding populations in Russia, as part of this survey, between 650 and 3000 listening points have been visited since 1999.

On identified projects, Yves informed the meeting that a Calculation on the survival rate of the Russian population of Woodcock has been carried out and there is ongoing ringing development of the Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and Portugal. He supported his presentation with three graphical tables highlighting winter survival rates, relative monitoring frequency, as well as number of contacts on site visits respectively.

Still on projects, the group intends to develop a census in the British Isles, Italy, Greece and Spain as a way of getting an index on inter-annual variations of abundance, this census, he said would be extended to Byelorussia, Baltic countries, Poland and Scandinavia.

The Group is also planning to promote Hunting bag surveys in order for Countries to organise bag surveys. Presently, bag surveys are used in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, France, Great Britain, Austria and Spain (in part).

In its forward plan, the group intends to increase its network of active members and to diversify its financial supports. It is also planning the 6th Woodcock and Snipe Workshop in 2003 possibly in France. However, Yves identified the need for an analysis of the available data from the surveys carried out.

With regard to Jacksnipe, he confirmed that very little is known about their distribution and numbers, coupled with no valid census method. The group's objective in this regard is to collect objective data on distribution and trends of this species, their priority location would be the Russian population during the breeding period, and this started-2001 – 2005. The result of this study will be published after the study.

Discussion points:

It was agreed that the Harvest group should also be involved in this study and studies of the other SGs that may show mortality rate. The group was also advised to build capacities on these species in SE Asia. More generally the group was encouraged to include economic figures for the number of birds hunted and this can be done with the harvest group. For the Jacksnipe it would be nice to see objectives targeted at identification of sites for conservation priorities. SE Asia could be a good focus. In view of the similarity of the Woodcock and Snipe group with the Waders, it was agreed to build a closer relationship. Wing survey, were for the time being not included in the immediate workplan.

1.5.5 Harvest Specialist Group – Gilles Deplanque

As a new Co-ordinator, he sought the co-operation of other specialist group as his mandate criss-crosses other groups and the group intends to look into not just hunting harvests but other issues such as mortality causes. He sought for corporation of other groups in view of the need for their data in his group work.

He went further to identify different forms of hunting for pleasure, economic reasons and subsistence, data on the first he said is a lot easier to get and possibility for food but the subsistence hunting may not be easy. He advocates for the data to be used in awareness raising. The first newsletter of the group will be ready at the end of summer.

Discussion points:

The group was advised to be closely linked to the IUCN Sustainable Use SG, the meeting also sees the need to set up a Wetlands Resource Use SG which should be a sub-division of the existing IUCN Sustainable Use SG.

The meeting agreed that a new terms of reference or MoC is required to better define the group's work, which might include socio-economic issues and mortality assessment due to crippling by gun-shots. Outputs of other work on shorebirds (Oceania and Asia) could be supplied to the group.

1.5.6 Cormorant Specialist Group – Forward Plan sent by Mennobart van Eerden

The Cormorant SG sent in its plans and DT presented this as follows:

- Presently co-ordinating the cormorants groups website(<http://www.tiscali.it/sv2001>)
- 5th edition of Cormorant research group bulletin to be published this spring
- Plans to organise winter counts over Europe and North Africa in the winter of 2002/2003, list of National co-ordinators ready.
- Next International Research Group meeting planned for Odessa in 2005
- Proceedings of the Freising meeting will be published in "Die Vogel welt" in 2002
- Group manages the European breeding number developments and a possibility of management of the population was a discussion at a recent European symposium on the great cormorant in Strasbourg.
- The group is involved in the REDCAFE project of the Pan European aimed at reducing the conflict between cormorants and fisheries on a pan-European scale.
- The group however, identifies gaps in regional co-ordination of South America and Asia, the meeting agreed that there is a vital need for networking mechanism to be a major component of the work plan of every group.

This was not further discussed, as the Co-ordinator was not physically present.

1.5.7 Flamingo Specialist Group – Alan Johnson

Membership – 35

Newsletters – functional and circulated to over 150 persons, it is the key to keeping the group together, but requires financial support. Lack of contacts even after several efforts.

Meetings /Conferences – 2 important meetings Held in Miami and Slimsbridge 1998 and 1973 respectively and a book called Flamingos was produced from the 1973 meeting.

Plans:

- Maintain the bulletin / Newsletter
- Develop an Action plan
- An International Flamingo Foundation is being planned and the group is making efforts to collaborate with the initiators.
- Data collection on going with support from the Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat

Discussion points:

The meeting advised the group to look into Flamingo workshop possibilities at the up coming ornithological conference.

1.5.8 Stork / Ibis / Spoonbill Specialist Group - Wim Van Den Bossche

The Group's joint make up, makes the groups membership very selective, due to difficulties in finding experts in these three species groups together.

Work is almost finalised in setting up a website, the group is also planning to create an Atlas Folder on the status of these birds in other parts of the World with pictures. Birdlife is said to have done extensive work on Storks. He said the group would require resources however, to create the website and run it.

The meeting advised that any possible cost cutting, such as the proposition by IUCN to host this space within its web should be welcomed.

The group has not been able to produce a bulletin over a long period and this has made the group inactive. The plan is to get the group started again, get out Newsletters and form email groups.

1.5.9 Swan Specialist Group – Jan Beekman (global co-ordinator) and Roberto Schlatter (co-ordinator for the Neotropics)

A global swan symposium was held in Virginia USA recently. Usually held once in 10 years, now the group is proposing a global meeting every 6 years and a regional every 3 years.

Presently the group has 3 regional co-ordinators and between 10-12 species population co-ordinators. The group intends to set up a literature database, and develop an action plan for the different species. The outputs of the recent symposium would be published soon.

An International Swan conference is planned for Chile. Roberto mentioned a lack of survey reporting on the large wetlands in Argentina, therefore proposing the inclusion of Argentina in the GEF flyway project. There is also a general lack of expertise in Argentina, hence the need to set up a small network of experts in Argentina.

Roberto announced a planned conference in October 2003 in Chile.

1.5.11 Wetland Inventory and Monitoring Specialist Group – Max Finlayson

Presently 25 active members.

The group's advantage is that the specifics of the group are usually tailored along members normal work schedule.

The membership database is almost completed, with general criteria for membership. These would be placed on WI website as soon as it is ready.

The membership would be broadened, but the issue of what to offer for membership will be discussed later in the group.

The group has various projects, which are either partly or fully funded namely-

- Ecological character concepts e.g. Ramsar framework for wetland inventory,
- AWI, Meta –data base format for inventory, risk assessment framework and Medwet inventory database.
- the group also seeks linkages with and harmonisation across databases for example – waterbird counts / Ramsar sites
- Input to "waterbirds Around the world" Feb, 2002.

The programme of the group also incorporates wise-use and capacity building.

The group is enthusiastic about the integration of data from all the groups for a larger global ornithological conference.

1.5.12 Wader Study Group - presented by Gerard Boere on behalf of the group

The presentation highlighted executive changes within the group. He went on to mention the recent annual conference of the group in 2001 with over 150 participants and over the next two years the conference will be held in Poland and Morocco in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Membership is 600 with a slight decrease, a functional website is already in place and the group enjoys good links with other regional and local wader groups.

To date, the group has various publications on International Wader studies as well as a WSG bulletin and proceedings from various workshops and meetings.

As per plans, the group is advocating a correlation of all their reports and volumes as a document.

1.5.13 Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group: Baz Hughes

Members: 900

He briefly mentioned that the group has had a corporate strategy in place since 1999 and went further to highlight the group's approach to conservation, its needs and future plans. In his presentation, he identified such values as accountability, corporate responsibility and charitable status as key to their corporate strategy.

In line with the group's ideologies, it identifies its needs in terms of what can be done to save threatened waterbirds through consultations, especially with Birdlife.

The group also has a threatened species strategy, which has the following as key guides:

- Vision

- Mission
- Guiding Principles
- Strategic objectives
- Operational objectives

The group has a global action plan for threatened species, under its action plan, the following species have been identified:

- White-headed Duck
- White-winged Duck
- Brazilian Merganser

The group also has five key projects namely:

1. IUCN Anseriformes Action Plan
2. Key sites
3. Areas in need of survey
4. Communication and information dissemination
5. Training for waterbird conservationists

A work plan has already been developed for these issues with an effective progress monitoring. His presentation further gave tips on Keys to success, which advises to prioritise, set targets, and performance indicators.

The group's priorities are in Information dissemination, Provision of advice, Small number of key projects, and assist in funding proposal submission (especially the developing countries). And its needs are Small scale financial support for information dissemination, Collaboration on key projects and online funding database.

1.5.14 Heron Specialist Group: Sent through Alan Johnson

The group views re-organisation as a key progress factor and would soon be made up of 40 executive members of which one vice-chairman from each continent and 160 collaborators from the present 200 membership. The group in terms of data compilation has done great work in the last 20 years. A summary of the conservation status of the world's taxa has been published in 2000 through membership efforts. An action plan for the group will be published in 2003. In addition to this, the group will be developing species action plans focussing on most endangered species e.g. White-eared Night heron.

On meetings, J.A Kushlan and Heinz Hafner convene a meeting for the International Ornithological Congress in Beijing in August 2002.

Key issues to be addressed are:

- Acknowledge the role of attendees in completing the book *Heron Conservation*
- Update attendees and Group members on Heron conservation issues worldwide with emphasis on recent advances in China and Asia.
- Consider opportunities for the reorganisation of the group with increasing regional emphasis in Asia and
- To plan for the writing of a worldwide Heron action plan.

This was not further discussed, as the Co-ordinator was not physically present.

1.6 PLENARY

Doug Taylor started the plenary by raising the need for each group to align its work into the larger WI strategy and in line with this each Programme leader was asked to make a presentation after which the programmes were open to comments and discussion. Note: further details of the four Programmes under the Strategy can be found at <http://www.wetlands.org/aboutWI/strategy.htm>

1.6.1 Taej Mundkur (Programme Lead- Capacity Building)

Discussion points:

The meeting agreed that capacity building and training should be targeted primarily at developing countries, especially more cost-effective in-country training, while Wetlands International should not get involved directly with policy issues as stated in Objective 4.4 (Raise awareness of policy developers, decision-makers and the general public of the functions and values of wetlands and their resources.).

Taej agreed that target audiences need to be defined clearly and he will circulate the Programme Action Plan to all Specialist Groups.

1.6.2 Marcel Silvius (Programme Lead – Wise Use)

Discussion points:

Wise use of wetlands was agreed to be essential and the meeting agreed that this is a crosscutting requirement for all the Programmes to reflect. The relationship between the Harvest Group and Wise Use SG of the IUCN / SSC should not be overlooked.

1.6.3 Douglas Taylor (Programme Lead - Wetland Inventory, Assessment and Monitoring)

Discussion points:

The meeting agreed to the programme strategy as presented by D.T however advised that the next phase of the Ramsar site database service should be better negotiated by Wetlands International.

1.6.4 Gerard Boere (Programme Lead - Wetland Species Conservation)

Discussion points:

The meeting agreed on the need for the Specialist Groups to be more involved in the scientific details of the programme such as the nomadic waterbird species survey and the scientific committee of the planned global flyway conference for , April 2004 titled 'Waterbirds around the World'.

It was also suggested that the Birdlife seabird programme is presently thematic in nature, but this can be integrated into the work of the species conservation programme, but there needs to be a line in seabirds that should be within the programme.

1.6.5 Mariano Gimenez-Dixon Presentation: Species Information Service – Specialist Group Partnership

The summary of Mariano's presentation was basically on species info system, as operated by the IUCN Species survival commission and the level of support the Specialist Groups make to this system. He reeled out the present status of the data system and the vision for the future, especially at developing a global species information resource. He seized the opportunity to re-emphasise on the possibility of joint engagement of the SGs by Wetlands International, Birdlife International and IUCN.

Discussion points: The Groups are keen to be more involved.

Allison mentioned that Birdlife International data is currently specie based and compatible with the IUCN/ SIS, she however would like Wetlands International, Birdlife International and IUCN to look into areas of collaboration on data information management, engaging the SGs especially in the IUCN Red listing.

2nd Day Proceedings:

The second day started at 9.08am with DT briefly introducing the objectives of the Waterbird population estimates (WPE) and sought the objective attention of the Co-ordinators which should lead to a strategic

brainstorming for a proper report to the International agreement, he then introduced Simon Delany to make his presentation.

1.7.1 Waterbird Population Estimates – SG involvement and production of WPE3 for Ramsar COP8, Forward plans for WPE4 and Red List reviews by Simon Delany (SD)-

In his presentation, SD mentioned that there exists a contract between Wetlands International and Ramsar to manage its database, however financial problems from last year affected the work progress but this has been overcome.

He mentioned that English fields would be incorporated to make the report clearer. He submitted a time schedule for the job completion and a four-key advice point for modification in the report and sought the support of the SGs co-ordinators on peer review of the WPE3 and the four proposed modifications.

Discussion points:

The meeting, agreed that rather than use the word "rapid changing" in the statement, the nine yearly review of the 1% level should be clearly emphasised. On shading the old data from the updates as a means of differentiation, the meeting faulted this and would rather prefer "dates" to grey shading especially in view of its inappropriateness in photocopying.

On Taxonomy, SD was advised to stick to existing and recognised taxa globally, but SD mentioned that in view of WI expertise on sub-species, it may be able to support Birdlife International to improve on its taxa and Alison welcomed this idea.

The meeting however agreed that SD should be conservative with the Taxa as in standardised agreements.

The meeting further agreed that SGs could help the WPE, by looking into possibilities of division into population ranges.

Alison: SDs vision is quite similar to Birdlife's however it would be nice if country and site codes can be incorporated.

The meeting agreed that the word "vulnerable" should be better explained with a footnote rather than just the word alone. **The meeting** went further to ask SD to send his requests on the WPE3 directly to the co-ordinators on areas of support required.

COFFEE BREAK

1.7.2 Birdlife International and Red Listing – Alison Stattersfield (Birdlife International)

DT invited Alison to give a presentation on Birdlife International and Red Listing

She started her presentation by running through their achievements and future plans amongst which are:

- Production of 3 global checklists
- Important Bird Area report produced
- Established a threatened birds of the World base in Cambridge
- Collaborated with TWSG on this
- SGs can re-assess the database constructively
- Other taxa assessments initiated
- Review of criteria imminent in 2004
- Launch as a project- an interactive website to chat on database and interact actively on the data
- A global partnership meeting is planned for 2004
- A book will soon be published on status of threatened birds and the way forward
- It is also in the pipeline to set targets for species, the support of the SGs would be needed in this regard.

She went further to state that their database is in parallel with IUCN SIS and species information is linked to species under the IBAs and this has been very useful. She mentioned that Birdlife and Wetlands International would be able to provide data for the COP8.

Discussion points:

Baz: The Waders Specialist Group and the threatened waterfowl SG is ready to work on waterfowl threatened species and this may be another opportunity for Birdlife to collaborate. **Mariano:** SGs should work closely with Birdlife on the red listing groups through a share of info.

Alison: Birdlife identifies with WPE4 and any red listing at sub-specie level.

1.7.3

Stefan Pihl's presentation on: Partnership the role of SG

In summary, Stefan briefly highlighted some key issues as fundamental in the SG work and these are:

- Utilisation of their work by Wetlands international and other partners in terms of copyrights and acknowledgements

- Developing a common purpose
- Possible support from Wetlands International and other partners
- Use of Wetlands International name in raising project funds and support
- Data sharing and analysis (reciprocal)

He mentioned the following as familiar characteristics of SGs:

- Independent
- Often few active members
- Based on voluntarism
- Weak financial base
- Varying contacts with Wetlands International
- Few common goals with Wetlands International.

In his submission, he subscribed to the following as the way forward:

- Development of an MOA or MoU as a basis for co-operation
- Define common goals for each group and Wetlands International
- Strengthen co-operation on technical level
- Help co-ordinators to feel as a group in terms of regular meetings and networks.

Discussion points:

Based on Stefan's presentation, **DT** asked the co-ordinators if they approve of WI strategy 2002-2005 as a common document for defining strategic positioning of the group objectives and targets. **The meeting** accepted this and agreed that an MoC should be drawn up for the SGs and signed by the identified focal points for the groups and Wetlands International.

In line with existing 3-year review of the SG and WI co-operation, the life span of the MoC is accepted to be 3 yearly, since the co-ordinators are nominated every 3 years as well.

Mariano: Proposed a discussion between Wetlands International and IUCN (SSC) to further discuss the MoC and review the possibility of a joint MoC.

1.8 Triennial Reporting 1999-2001

DT requested for SGs to give their triennial reporting, none of the groups had its report ready, and **the meeting** agreed that this should be made available for presentation to the board.

On the duration, the meeting agreed to leave it as 3 yearly and in simple format. However any significant progress can be reported in notes to the Wetlands International within the period, and the triennial report should be placed on the website.

Discussion point:

The meeting suggested that WI should develop and forward to the co-ordinators, a framework for the report as a guide on the reporting format.

1.9

Network development and support, including Memoranda of Understanding / Agreement Specialist Groups

Doug Taylor in his presentation, identified the need for an MoU or MoC between the groups and Wetlands International using the strategy as a common document. In a run-down of the present status of the SGs and Wetlands International he mentioned the need to strengthen the existing network and for the groups to identify specific projects, as non-specific projects are difficult to raise money for. He then asked for feedback-

Discussion points

A small grant should be built into the support to the SGs to cover such things as phone calls, mails etc incurred in the groups' work towards result delivery. It was also agreed that, there is the need to update and review the Specialist group membership data IUCN stated that it would be willing to support the SGs through the provision of a website, email link and technical / fundraising advice.

The meeting agreed that the practice of sending welcome packs to new members should be re-visited and Wetlands International and IUCN should take note. It was also re-emphasised at this point that the MoC development should be a priority. The meeting went further to propose that this MoC should be developed by Wetlands International, and circulated to the SG network for input.

1.10 Science support to Ramsar Convention and other key environmental treaties and agreements

The summary of Doug's presentation is that Wetlands International will be proposing to Ramsar in terms of science support, but will like to know the willingness of the SGs to assist Wetlands International in result delivery before it goes ahead to make the commitment to Ramsar. The SGs are expected to provide their expertise in this regard.

DT went further to advise that with the support of SGs in this commitment to be made to Ramsar on Ramsar's request, it will be worth the while of the SGs to include this in their workplan as funding for such roles will be possible as long as it is within the confines of the proposal.

Discussion points:

The meeting viewed this as a golden opportunity for SGs budgeting. The groups sought to know the level or amount of work required of them, **DT** assured them that it would merely be an update on their existing efforts and certainly not be overbearing on them.

Max: The main issue here is for Wetlands International to be in the mainstream of the STRP info delivery and then assess the volume of work needed.

The meeting: Agreed to support the proposal to Ramsar.

1.11 Other Business

1.11.1 Nomination of SG representation to the Board of Directors

DT asked for the procedure of nominating SG members to the board and how the group can rationally select members to the board.

Stefan: There is no clear process for nominations to the board, but I would suggest that we leave this to the board.

Max: I would suggest that this meeting raise this as a recommendation to the board, he mentioned that already some sub-committees are being proposed to the board. **DT:** On regional representation, should we target only the five listed regions only, **the meeting** agreed that to wait for the board's outcome on this as this is already being deliberated.

1.11.2 Conference Announcement by Joe Kerekes.

Joe Kerekes announced an Ornithological conference titled 'Limnology and Waterbirds' coming up in Canada in August 2003, he seized the opportunity to implore all the SG co-ordinators and members to participate actively. He also mentioned that discussions have started with Wetlands International to seek ways of support for the conference.

1.11.3 Closing

Max gave the closing remark, acknowledging the high level of willingness exhibited by all parties and he implored them to put this into action, he expressed his gladness that most of the SGs fit into the new programme concept. He mentioned that in the past, focus had been on what was not working, but should be on what has worked. He thanked the groups for their presence and most of all Doug for a job well executed!

