



# CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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SECOND MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO  
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR  
THE AQUATIC WARBLER (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)  
Biebrza National Park, Poland, 13-15 May 2010  
Agenda Item 8.1

## PROPOSED NEW TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF NATIONAL REPORTS

*(Prepared by BirdLife International in consultation with the CMS Secretariat)*

### Background

1. Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) undertake to implement the general and country-specific provisions of the Action Plan annexed to the MoU as the basis for Aquatic Warbler conservation. According to MoU paragraph 6, signatories are expected to prepare a national report on the implementation of the MoU within their countries and transmit it to the Secretariat. The Secretariat is then expected to transmit all national reports to the signatories and all the other range states within the agreement area.
2. The Secretariat is also expected to prepare an overview report compiled on the basis of all information at its disposal pertaining to the Aquatic Warbler, including information provided by the signatories in their national reports.
3. To facilitate the compilation of national reports a new template for submission has been developed by BirdLife International in April 2010. A copy of the template is attached to this note. The proposed new MoU reporting format is based on the reporting format for species action plans in the EU. Since national experts of most range states have prepared national progress reports in 2008 during the preparation of the updated International Species Action Plan for the Aquatic Warbler using EU reporting format, future reporting on the MoU implementation using a similar reporting format is expected to reduce the need for double work.
4. The proposed new MoU reporting format is shorter than the one adopted by the First Meeting of the signatories in 2006 and at the same time precise. It allows a quantification of the level of implementation using the methodology developed by BirdLife International and used for the assessment of the implementation of 23 Species Action Plans (SAP) in 2004 (Nagy & Crockford 2004). The methodology is based on a set of measurable indicators which describe the level of implementation and the conservation impact of SAP. The indicators are based on the following types of information, collected and assessed by the signatory states:

- Protection status of the species;
- Extent to which national/regional action plans have been developed and implemented;



- Suitability and extent to which species population is in protected areas;
  - Existence of site management plans which have targeted measures for the species;
  - Extent to which other recommended habitat conservation measures have been taken;
  - Overall change in the species conservation status.
5. A specially designed set of two excel tables has been prepared for the purpose of AW MoU reporting.

### **Implementation of actions**

6. With regard to the need to develop some standard indices describing the progress in implementation of the action plans it was decided that we will follow a similar methodology as was applied by Umberto Gallo-Orsi in 2000 (*Saving Europe's Most Threatened Birds*) and further refined by Nagy & Crockford (2004).

7. The first table contains a consolidated list of the recommended actions from the revised Aquatic Warbler Action Plan (BirdLife International 2008. International Species Action Plan for the Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*), which have been formulated as measurable targets (changes in the situation of the species). For each target a priority score has been assigned, in accordance with the priority given to that action by the action plan.

8. Each signatory is asked to describe the measures taken in their country towards each of these targets and to evaluate the progress made to their full achievement by assigning it a score.

9. Beyond recording the progress in implementation of the actions, the effectiveness of these measures has to be estimated in relation to the current state and trend of the population of the species. The signatories are requested to assess the impact of the measures on the population in terms of size of the population affected by the measures taken and how the affected populations responded to the measures.

10. It is to be noted that some proposed actions refer to measures for which data are to be reported on the second spreadsheet (in case of issues related to protected area designation and management planning). In this case, details have to be given in the second sheet.

11. At the bottom of the table, there is some place to describe possible additional measures implemented in the respective country which are not directly related to any of the targets in the action plan. Such measures (if they exist) should also be evaluated in a similar way for their level of implementation and effectiveness.

12. Finally, **each signatory is asked to provide a short (not more than half a page) overall evaluation about the implementation of the action plan in the country.** This evaluation should explain *inter alia* which were the main successes and difficulties in implementing the action plan, and to what extent the existence of an international action plan helped to improve the conservation status of the species in the country.

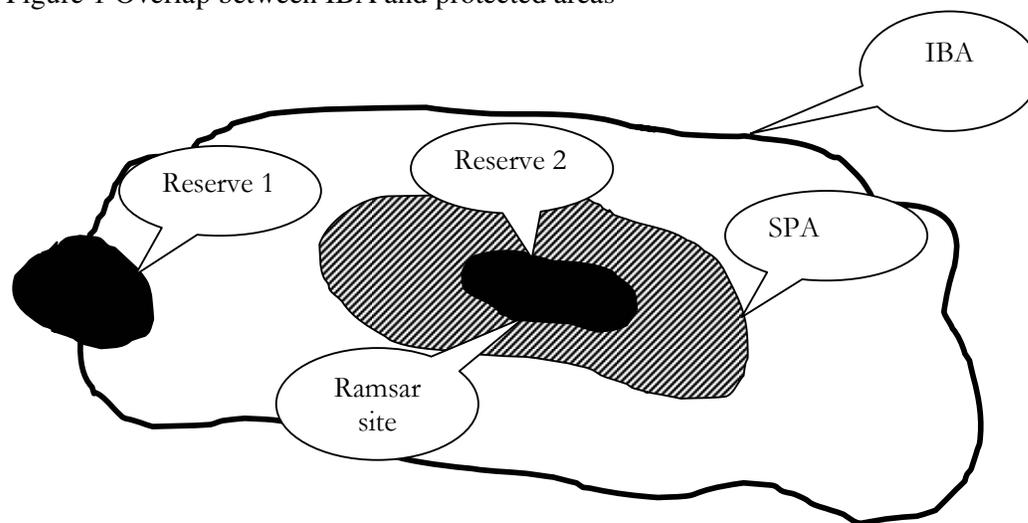
### **Site protection measures and population estimates**

13. The second table contains estimates for the breeding population of the species in the country, information about IBAs and protected areas. The information about IBAs and

protected areas is taken from the information currently available in the World Bird Database, the information about the SPAs is based on the January 2008 version of the database available to the European Commission. Aquatic Warbler population numbers were provided by relevant Aquatic Warbler national experts. These datasets are likely to be outdated and incomplete as the last updates were made during the SAP preparation in 2008.

14. Signatories are asked to check and update these data by:
  - i. Checking whether all internationally important Aquatic Warbler sites are listed for the country. Possibly missing sites and the related protected areas should be added. Any additional sites of Aquatic Warbler occurrence can also be added even if they do not fulfil international IBA criteria.
  - ii. Checking whether relevant national Aquatic Warbler population numbers are correct. These numbers will be the basis of the species global population evaluation.
  - iii. Checking with their national IBA coordinator whether more up-to-date information on IBAs is available at national level.
  - iv. Evaluating the situation regarding management plans and assigning the appropriate score (see information in box for explanation).
  - v. In the column “Determines largest PA coverage”, marking with ‘Yes’ those protected areas which make up the largest protected area coverage. This is necessary to handle sites with multiple designations without using GIS and digitised site boundaries (see figure 1 for example: The largest PA coverage is made up by the areas of Reserve 1 and the SPA overlapping with the IBA; you should mark only these protected areas as ‘Yes’ in the table). In this case, Reserve 1 on the first sheet and the SPA on the second sheet should be marked with “Yes”.

Figure 1 Overlap between IBA and protected areas



15. Giving information on the minimum and maximum population of the species in question within the protected areas which are marked with yes plus in any case for the existing or proposed SPAs (that would allow to analyse the SPA coverage separately). These data will be important to estimate the population within the protected area/SPA network compared to the national/global populations.

## SCORING SYSTEM

**Implementation scores:** IS will range from 0–4 according to increasing level of progress towards the target

0: Action not needed/not relevant;

1: Little or no work (0-10%) carried out (only piecemeal actions without being part of a strategic approach);

2: Some work started (11-50%), but no significant progress yet;

3: Significant progress (51-75%), but target still not reached;

4: Action fully implemented, no further work required except continuation of on-going work (e.g. in case of monitoring).

**Progress with implementation:** The progress with implementation will be evaluated from the assigned Implementation Scores (IS) for each action applying the above described process. As explained above, the implementation scores measure the distance to target.

The overall level of implementation at national level will thus be characterised by the **National Implementation Score (NIS)** that combines for each country the priority of the actions with the level of implementation. The National Implementation Score ranges between 1 and 4 where 1 represents little or no progress while 4 represents full implementation.

The overall implementation of the action plan on MoU level will be evaluated by calculating an **Average Implementation Score (AIS)** from the National Implementation Scores. The Average Implementation Score will present one value, ranging from 1 to 4 (where again 1 represents little or no progress while 4 represents full implementation).

**Effectiveness:** The outcome of the implementation of the action plans will be measured in relation to the short, medium and long term aims set in the action plan. On this basis the following categories will be distinguished:

- None of the aims were achieved;
- Short term aims achieved;
- Medium term aims achieved;
- Long term aims achieved;
- Status unknown.