

NATIONAL REPORT 2015
FOR THE AQUATIC WARBLER MOU AND ACTION PLAN
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

This reporting template is designed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan associated with the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*). Reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will support information exchange throughout the Aquatic Warbler's migratory range and assist the identification of necessary future actions by the Signatories. The questions presented here go beyond the scope of information already requested from CMS Contracting Parties for national reports to the CMS Conference of the Parties.

GENERAL INFORMATION

<p>Which agency or institution has been primarily responsible for the preparation of this report?</p> <p>Landesumweltamt Brandenburg, Staatliche Vogelschutzwarte (Brandenburg State Office for Environment, Bird Conservation Centre)</p>
<p>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team • University of Greifswald, Institute of Botany and Landscape Ecology • NABU Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union / BirdLife Germany, LV Brandenburg
<p>Reports submitted to date:</p> <p>30.04.2006 30.04.2010</p>
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OBJECTIVES

1.0 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE

1.1. *To promote national and international broad policies and legislation which favour the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat*

1.1.1. *Promote the full protection of the Aquatic Warbler and its habitats through national and international legislation*

- a) Is the Aquatic Warbler protected under national legislation in your country?
 Yes, the species is protected and protection level is sufficient
 Yes, the species is protected, but protection level is not sufficient
 No, the species is not protected
- b) If Yes, please describe the state of protection and limitations and conservation responsibilities this protection status imposes on the state, conservationists and land-users.
- protected according to the EU Bird's Directive, Annex I
 - all important breeding sites and habitats are protected
 - conservation status of the population must not deteriorate.
 - strictly protected under the federal conservation law (Bundesnaturschutzgesetz) → highest conservation category
 - forbidden are: catching, injuring or killing of birds, any disturbance at the breeding, feeding and resting sites (all kinds of refuges) and damaging / destroying of nests
 - critically endangered in the German Red Data Book (without legal relevance)
- c) If the Aquatic Warbler is not protected or protection level is not sufficient, please describe what your country is planning to do to ensure highest possible protection of the species.
- d) Is there national legislation in place in your country that ensures effective protection of Aquatic Warbler habitat (breeding, stop-over and wintering sites), including prevention of potentially detrimental activities (drainage, mineral extraction, industry, etc.).
- Yes No
- e) If Yes, please provide details.
- f) If No, please describe measures taken to ensure protection of Aquatic Warbler breeding habitats. Legal habitat protection on the federal level (Bundesnaturschutzgesetz) as well as on the state level (Brandenburg and Mecklenburg - Western Pomerania) is focussing at selected habitat types which cover most of the last breeding sites in the lower Oder valley. For conservation of the breeding habitats this is not strict enough, first of all regarding water management. This is also true for the Lower Oder Valley National Park Act (09.11.2006). However, there is a site management plan since 11 Sept. 2014 that is more precise.
In Brandenburg 200 ha of new Aquatic Warbler habitat were established within the "Testing and Development" project "Habitat restoration and conservation for the globally threatened Aquatic Warbler using novel approaches in wet grassland management in Lower Oder Valley National Park" (2009–2014 incl. preparatory study) – improved water and grassland management with up to 3 singing males compared to zero before.
In Mecklenburg – Western Pomerania, the restoration of potential Aquatic Warbler habitats is targeted by government-funded restoration projects such as the Mire Conservation Programme ("Moorschutzprogramm"; revised and prolonged in 2009). On the short and mid term, however, no habitats will be restored since mowing is not allowed in most sites. The former project site of the Polish-German LIFE project (2005-2011) in Peene Valley (150 ha) is annually mown since 2006 and partly suitable as Aquatic Warbler habitat.

1.1.2. *Seek national or international policy incentives to maintain suitable farming practices at breeding/migration/wintering sites which are impacted by drainage or threatened by succession*

Are there any national or international policy incentives to maintain suitable farming practices at sites occupied by the Aquatic Warbler in your country (agro-environmental schemes, etc.)?

Yes No Country is outside of breeding range

If yes, please describe briefly the nature of the incentives and whether they are effectively applied or used by farmers and land-managers.

Among the agri-environmental schemes used in Brandenburg, the “Kulturlandschaftsprogramm Brandenburg” (KULAP, EU co-funded) is of major importance for AW conservation and largely used by farmers.

If no, please describe what measures are being taken to ensure availability of such incentives.

2.0 SPECIES AND HABITAT PROTECTION

2.1. *To promote adequate protection of sites occupied by the Aquatic Warbler and remove key factors adversely affecting the habitat*

2.1.1. *Seek designation as protected areas of all sites regularly holding breeding Aquatic Warblers.*

a) In the table attached (Annex I), please provide details for all regularly occupied Aquatic Warbler sites in your country and indicate their protection status (*please expand the table if necessary*).

b) If Aquatic Warbler sites currently are not fully protected or protection level is not sufficient, please provide information about constraints and what your country is planning to do to ensure full and adequate protection of these sites.

The last remaining breeding site in Germany is situated in a national park which had led to transformation of suitable habitat into core areas (“wilderness zones”). That has been compensated by turning of 200 ha of grassland outside the core areas into suitable AW habitat (see 1.1.1 f).

The new site management plan for the Lower Oder National Park from 11 Sept. 2014 includes AW habitat requirements and adequate measures: water management, mowing regime (“dynamic grassland management”, i. e. alternating early and late mowing).

c) If Site Management Plans have not been developed for all Aquatic Warbler sites, please describe what hampers development of Management Plans and what your country is doing to ensure development, approval and implementation of Site Management Plans for regular Aquatic Warbler sites.

The site management plan for the Lower Oder Valley National Park from 11 Sept. 2014 is an appropriate framework for AW conservation.

A site management plan for the potentially restored former breeding site Peene Valley was finalised in 2011 within the EU-LIFE-project „Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany“. Management planning for the Nature Park Peene Valley and for the Nature 2000 site Peene Valley will start in 2015 and the leading authority has announced to incorporate outcomes of the Aquatic Warbler management plan.

d) Please advise what assistance you would require to complete or improve existing Site Management Plans.

No assistance necessary.

2.1.2. *Prevent habitat alteration, habitat fragmentation, pollution and other factors that could be detrimental to the Aquatic Warbler in sites it regularly occupies for breeding/migration/wintering.*

a) Are new *development* projects that could potentially have a detrimental effect on current or potential Aquatic Warbler sites (such as drainage, peat extraction, construction of highways, etc.) subject to environmental impact assessment in your country? Yes No

b) Have there been any potentially detrimental projects *implemented* in any Aquatic Warbler habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding? Yes No

c) If yes, indicate sites involved, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.

In the Lower Oder Valley (Brandenburg), the implementation of the Lower Oder Valley National Park Act led to losses of suitable habitat which, however, has been partly compensated by successful creation of 200 ha new habitat (see above).

d) Has implementation of any potentially detrimental project in any Aquatic Warbler habitat in your country been *halted* since signing this Memorandum of Understanding? Yes No

e) If Yes, please give details.
See 2.1.2 c)

2.2. ***To manage the breeding habitat to increase numbers, productivity and distribution and manage migration and wintering sites.***

2.2.1. *Regulate water levels and restore natural water conditions*

a) Has water management been implemented at Aquatic Warbler breeding/migration/wintering sites in your country? Yes No

b) If Yes, please describe actions taken, sites involved and effects expected/achieved.
Within the “Testing and Development” project on ca. 200 ha groundwater tables were risen up by creation of new hydrological facilities. The national park management plan fixes this AW friendly water management for the future.

c) What constraints are limiting implementation of these activities at other sites in need of effective water management?

2.2.2. *Prevent natural succession of the vegetation by undertaking management where necessary*

a) Has vegetation management been undertaken at Aquatic Warbler breeding/migration/wintering sites in your country to prevent natural succession? Yes No

b) If Yes, please describe actions taken (mowing, bush-removing, etc), what equipment was used for vegetation management and how efficient it was. Please refer to reports if available and comparative analysis of different types of equipment if it was conducted.

Breeding sites in Brandenburg have been mown or partly grazed for decades. Reed or bush encroachment is not a problem at this site. Continuous mowing of these nutrient-rich sites only after breeding without sufficient removal of the biomass has led partly to habitat deterioration due to development of dense and high stands of sedges or grasses and a thick litter layer.

Scientific studies (TANNEBERGER et al. 2008; 2010) proved the need for alternating mowing dates and the creation of a mosaic of early and late mown areas. Occupied sites should be mown late and unoccupied sites early in order to be in an optimal state next year. In the Testing and Development project this “dynamic grassland management” was implemented for the first time. For the future this concept is fixed in the national park management plan.

In a former breeding site in Mecklenburg – Western Pomerania (Peene Valley) mowing and some bush removal on 150 ha have started again after 20-50 years of abandonment in 2006 and are continued until now. Habitat conditions have improved substantially.

- c) If No, what constraints are limiting vegetation management at other sites where it is needed and what is your country doing to ensure proper vegetation management at Aquatic Warbler breeding sites?

2.2.3. *Hand-scything and mowing*

- a) If historical information is available, please describe to which extent current Aquatic Warbler breeding sites were hand scythed and mown.

Hand scything and mowing has been without any importance for decades.

- b) Are hand-scything and mowing being applied for habitat conservation for the Aquatic Warbler in your country?

Yes No

- c) If Yes, please describe how this was approached, which sites were involved and the area covered. Please provide details if conservation effect of hand-scything and mowing has been evaluated. Please refer to published materials if available.

- d) What constraints are limiting hand-scything and mowing at sites where extensive habitat management is needed?

2.2.4. *Controlled burning*

- a) Is controlled burning a legal habitat management tool in your country?

Yes No

- b) If Yes, is burning used as a habitat management tool for Aquatic Warbler? Please describe actions taken, sites involved and effects achieved or expected. Please refer to published materials if information regarding the effects of controlled burning has been summarized and published.

- c) If No, then what actions are being undertaken to legalize controlled burning?

The present state of knowledge does not suggest a need of burning in the existing breeding areas in Brandenburg.

2.2.5. *Grazing*

- a) Has grazing been used for habitat management at Aquatic Warbler sites in your country?

Yes No

- b) If yes, please describe which animals are used, which sites are involved and what effects are expected/achieved. Please give reference to published materials if information regarding the effects of grazing has been summarized and published.

Grazing by cattle is only used in parts of the Lower Oder Valley breeding site. The predominant method used in the region is mowing.

2.2.6. *Disseminate habitat management recommendations to land managers*

- a) Are Aquatic Warbler habitat management recommendations being disseminated to land managers and other interested parties in your country?

Yes No Country is outside of breeding range

- b) If Yes, please describe ways of dissemination of habitat management recommendations to land managers used: events, publications, etc. Please give reference to published materials.

In the Lower Oder Valley, farmers who had breeding Aquatic Warblers on their meadows have been informed in order to adapt their management by later mowing. More sophisticated management including spread of information to the farmers started after 2009 as a part of the Testing and Development Project.

For the Peene Valley, the LIFE project (2005-2010) has issued a flyer summarising information on AW habitat requirements and management. It was distributed in two federal states Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg.

- c) If No, then what constraints are limiting dissemination of habitat management recommendations and what should be done to overcome these constraints?

- d) Please, advise if there is successful experience other Range States can draw on and what assistance your country would require to help share this information.

Eutrophic breeding habitats of Aquatic Warblers (e. g. river floodplains) need continuous removal of biomass. Postponing mowing as the only measure is not the appropriate way as a mosaic structure of early and late mown patches is needed. This has to be achieved by

- yearly surveys of Aquatic Warbler occurrence from the onset of the breeding season by trained staff,
- incentives which encourage farmers to change mowing (or grazing) regimes on a yearly basis according to Aquatic Warbler occurrence,
- close contact between Aquatic Warbler experts and farmers / land managers.

2.3. *To protect the Aquatic Warbler and its habitat in the winter quarters and along the migration route*

2.3.1. *Promote the protection and appropriate management of wintering and passage sites*

- a) In the table attached (Annex I), please provide details about major Aquatic Warbler passage and wintering sites in your country (*please expand the table if necessary*)

Various ringing programmes in wetlands and increased birding activities take place in most parts of Germany. Due to these activities, single birds on autumn migration are observed or ringed in most years at varying locations. There is, however, no evidence or indication for the existence of specific passage sites of particular importance.

- b) Are primary Aquatic Warbler passage/wintering sites appropriately managed in your country?

Fully Partially No

- c) Please list on-going and implemented projects and provide brief information about results achieved.

- d) What are the remaining gaps and what is your country planning to do to ensure sufficient protection and management of primary passage/wintering sites?

See above. Most migrating Aquatic Warblers are observed in protected areas.

2.4. *To restore habitats for the Aquatic Warbler*

2.4.1. *Undertake the ecological restoration of potential breeding sites of the Aquatic Warbler*

- a) Have potential or irregularly occupied Aquatic Warbler breeding sites in your country been evaluated?

Fully Partially No Country is outside of breeding range

- b) If Yes, what initiatives aimed at ecological restoration of potential breeding sites have been undertaken in your country? Which sites are involved and what effects are expected / achieved? Participation in EU-LIFE-Nature project “Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany” (2005-2010): project site Peene Valley, Mecklenburg – Western Pomerania. Actions were i. a.: 120-130 ha are mown annually for AW habitat restoration, management and biomass use planning, AW and habitat monitoring.

In the federal State of Brandenburg, an action plan for former and potential breeding sites has been prepared: TANNEBERGER, F., J. BELLEBAUM & A. FRICK (2011): Managementplan fuer den Seggenrohrsanger. Besides management recommendations for the Lower Oder Valley five former breeding sites with potential for re-colonisation were identified. In one of these areas improvement of water management and land use is running already, for the others there are plans or concepts in preparation. A second priority fen mire is target of the LIFE project “Improvement of the breeding and feeding habitats for the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) as well as for the Corn Crake (*Crex crex*) and the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) in the SPA “Schorfheide-Chorin” (2012-2017).

- c) If No, what are the constraints and which actions should be taken in order to overcome these constraints?

Water management is in most potential breeding sites the main limiting factor.

3.0. MONITORING AND RESEARCH

3.1. *To develop and implement a monitoring programme enabling population trends to be tracked*

3.1.1. *Distribution of a methodology for counting Aquatic Warblers*

- a) Is the methodology adopted for counting Aquatic Warblers used on the national level *different* to what is advised in the Aquatic Warbler Species Action Plan?

Yes No No methodology is adapted

- b) If Yes, please describe briefly possible differences and amendments.

- c) Does your country have experience applying this methodology and what can be learned from this experience?

- d) What does your country do to distribute and familiarize relevant institutions/specialists with this methodology?

3.1.2. Undertake national surveys to estimate breeding populations

- a) Have national (all-country) surveys of Aquatic Warbler breeding population been undertaken in your country?

- Yes (give years) **Annual full counts over the reporting period.**
 No
 Country is outside of breeding range

- b) If Yes, what methodology is used (full counts, transect counts, etc.) and what organization was coordinating the survey?

Synchronised counts (2 per year) of the whole population organised by the National Park administration and OTOB; additionally intensive search for vocalising males and warning females by volunteers and rangers from May-July coordinated by the National Park.

- c) What is the size and trend of the national breeding population (vocalizing males)? Please refer to published materials if applicable.

Year of survey: 2010	Year of survey: 2011	Year of survey: 2012	Year of survey: 2013	Year of survey: 2014
Population size: 3	Population size: 0	Population size: 3	Population size: 3	Population size: 2

Trend: declining.

- d) If Yes, to which extent was the territory of your country covered by the survey:

- Fully (> 90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 High (60-90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 Medium (30-60 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 Low (< 30 % of suitable habitats surveyed)

- e) When is the next national (all-country) survey of the Aquatic Warbler planned in your country?

2015

- f) If no national surveys have been conducted, please indicate existing constraints and what you country going to do to ensure that national surveys of the Aquatic Warbler are conducted?

3.1.3. Collect data at the major known passage sites and identify further resting sites

- a) Have studies at known Aquatic Warbler passage sites been conducted in your country?

Yes No

- b) If Yes, please describe briefly, which major passage sites are being monitored, what monitoring is being conducted (Aquatic Warbler population, habitat parameters, impact assessment, migration strategy, etc) and which organizations are involved?

- c) What are the main findings and what conservation implications do they have?

- d) If Yes, to what extent are major known Aquatic Warbler passage sites are being monitored in your country?

- Fully (> 90% of known sites)
 High (60-90 % of known sites)
 Medium (30-60 % of known sites)
 Low (< 30 % of known sites)

- f) To what extent have major Aquatic Warbler passage sites been identified in your country?
- Fully (> 90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - High (60-90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Medium (30-60 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Low (< 30 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - No monitoring is conducted
- g) What are the gaps and what is your country doing to address them?
[No regular passage sites known \(see 2.3.1\).](#)

3.1.4. *Identify major wintering areas*

- a) Have studies aimed at identifying Aquatic Warbler wintering areas have been conducted in your country?
 Yes No Country is outside of wintering range
- b) If Yes, what are the main findings and conservation implications? If available, please refer to published reports.
- c) If Yes, To what extent was the territory of your country covered by the survey of wintering areas?
- Fully (> 90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - High (60-90 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Medium (30-60 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
 - Low (< 30 % of suitable habitats surveyed)
- d) If wintering sites have been identified, to what extent are these sites being monitored during migration?
- Fully (> 90% of known sites)
 - High (60-90 % of known sites)
 - Medium (30-60 % of known sites)
 - Low (< 30 % of known sites)
 - No monitoring is conducted
- e) If your country is outside of Aquatic Warbler wintering range, which international initiatives aimed at identification of Aquatic Warbler wintering grounds has your country been involved in? What are the main findings?
[See reports of the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team AWCT. The work of AWCT in West Africa and research of doctor and diploma students in Djoudj/Senegal have been supported by the German Ornithological Society \(DO-G\), the German Federal Foundation for Environment \(DBU\) and several German private foundations. The activities of Dr. M. Flade as the chairman of the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team, especially in West Africa, are supported by the state government of Brandenburg](#)
- f) What are the gaps and what needs to be done to help address them?

3.1.5. *Research into habitat characteristics at migration and wintering sites*

a) Has research into habitat characteristics at migration and/or wintering sites been conducted in your country?

Yes No

b) If Yes, please provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

c) What are the main findings and conservation implications?

d) What are the remaining gaps and what needs to be done to address them?

No regular passage sites known - see 2.3.1.

3.1.6. *Research on movements during the breeding season / exchange of subpopulations*

Has research on Aquatic Warbler movements during breeding season/exchange of subpopulations been conducted in your country?

Yes No Country is outside of breeding range

If Yes, please describe which territories were covered, what methods were used (colour ringing, radio-tagging, etc.) and what were the main findings. Please give reference to published materials if available.

If Yes, was the research on movements during the breeding season coordinated with researchers from neighbouring Aquatic Warbler Range States.

Yes No

If the research hasn't been conducted, what is your country planning to do to initiate such cooperation?

Outcomes of an ongoing colour ringing programme in Western Poland would be also applicable in Germany but data from Poland are not available for scientific analyses. Implementation of similar activities may be considered after a breeding population has been re-established in Germany.

3.1.7. *Develop and implement an international monitoring programme*

Is your country participating in development and/or implementation of international Aquatic Warbler monitoring programmes?

Yes No

If Yes, please list on-going and completed projects and indicate which areas they focus on and which other countries are involved. Please provide reference to published results if available.

Participation in monitoring planning of the EU-LIFE-Nature project "Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany" (2005-2010) – ornithological, botanical, hydrological and entomological monitoring schemes for project countries Poland and Germany (and possibly others). Contribution to AW monitoring programs in BMU-funded peatland rewetting projects in Belarus and Ukraine. Contribution to the development of monitoring methods and programs through active participation in the Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team; participation of German volunteers in Aquatic Warbler counts in Belarus and the Ukraine.

Are there areas that haven't been properly addressed, if so, what needs to be done to assist your country in addressing these gaps?

No remaining gaps.

3.2. *To promote research useful for the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler in the future*

3.2.1. *Undertake comparative studies on breeding success and population recruitment in different habitats*

a) Have studies on breeding success and population recruitment in different habitats been conducted in your country?

- Yes, in collaboration with other Range States)
- Yes, on the national scale
- No comparative studies have been conducted
- Country is outside of breeding range

b) If available, please list on-going and completed studies and give reference to published reports.

Comparative studies carried out dealt more with habitat selection and hardly with breeding success. Because of indirect implications and the fact that these are nevertheless “useful for AW conservation” some references are listed here:

TANNEBERGER F, FLADE M, PREIKSA Z, SCHRÖDER B (2010) Habitat selection of the globally threatened Aquatic Warbler at the western margin of the breeding range and implications for management. *Ibis* 152: 347-358.

TANNEBERGER, F., J. BELLEBAUM, M. DYLAWSKI, T. FARTMANN, S. JURZYK-NORDLÖW, I. KOSKA, C. TEGETMEYER & M. WOJCIECHOWSKA (2011): Habitats of the globally threatened Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) in Pomerania – site conditions, flora, and vegetation characteristics. *Plant Diversity and Evolution* 129 (3-4): 253-273.

TANNEBERGER, F., J. BELLEBAUM, A. HELMECKE & M. MINETS (2013): Nesting and foraging characteristics of the strongly declining Aquatic Warbler population in Pomerania. *Acta Ornithol* 48: 109-118

FRICK A., F. TANNEBERGER, J. BELLEBAUM (2014): Model based selection of areas for the restoration of *Acrocephalus paludicola* habitats in NE Germany. *Environmental Management* 53:728-738.

c) What are the main findings of these studies?

The main findings refer to the Pomeranian population (NE Germany and NW Poland) as a whole and are therefore (and to inform also on the NW-Polish sites) presented here for both countries.

From the detailed analysis of all current breeding sites, it emerged that the less productive coastal breeding sites are characterised by dominant *Phragmites australis* stands with a well developed herb layer (e.g. Rozwarowo Marshes, the stronghold of the species in Pomerania), and that the sites in lower Oder valley are more productive and dominated by *Carex acuta*, *Phalaris arundinacea*, or meadow grasses (e.g. Lower Oder Valley National Park, the last breeding site in Germany).

As in the core population sites, optimal conditions during late May/early June include a vegetation height of less than 70 cm, a cover of the lower herb layer of approx. 20 % and of the upper herb layer of less than 60 %, i.e. rather sparse vegetation. In contrast to the core population sites, where the water height is up to 20 cm and a thick litter layer is needed for building nests above it, in Pomerania the water height is only 0-1 cm and the thickness of the litter layer less than 10 cm. This is probably connected to the larger invertebrate biomass on moist sites with a small litter layer. Again in contrast to the core population sites, habitat heterogeneity is high and specific foraging habitats with a vegetation height gradient (edges between used and not used areas, ditches) and with moister conditions (ditches, depressions) are preferred by females provisioning their nestlings. The distance between foraging habitats with sufficient food supply and nesting sites cause (probably unfavourably) long foraging flights, but still allows successful breeding. A refined analysis of nesting site conditions and breeding success as well as of population development and exchange between breeding sites is recommended.

Trophic conditions in current and potential Aquatic Warbler habitats strongly influence the management needed to maintain or restore suitable conditions in Pomerania. Early summer land use is needed in the more productive sites to prevent habitat deterioration by succession to higher and denser vegetation. As this also poses a serious threat to broods, it is recommended to create a mosaic of early and late used patches by alternating land use. Such a mosaic also offers edges as preferred foraging habitats. In the less productive sites, winter mowing can maintain suitable habitat conditions. Small stripes should be left uncut to increase prey availability and to provide nest-building material. Further eutrophication needs to be prevented, and habitat restoration is probably best supported by summer mowing. Such land use on mires and re-wetted peatland belongs to a variety of wet, environmentally harmless forms of peatland agriculture and forestry (so-called paludiculture) that offer climate, biodiversity, and socio-economic benefits.

A testing and Development Project was implemented in 2009-2014 in order to protect and restore AW habitats. Improved water management and sophisticated mowing regimes proved to be successful.

- d) Are there any future comparative studies your country is able to initiate? What would be needed to do this?
After comprehensive research during the last years no further studies are planned, so far.
- e) If no comparative studies are being implemented, what is your country planning to do to stimulate this research and what assistance would be required?

3.2.2. *Assess the effect of burning, scything, mowing, grazing and water conditions on breeding populations*

- a) Effect of which of the following factors and potential habitat management techniques on Aquatic Warbler breeding population was assessed in your country?
- Controlled burning
 - Scything
 - Mowing
 - Water conditions
 - Grazing
 - No assessment has been conducted
- b) What are the main findings and conservation implications? If available, please give reference to published reports.
Within the past and present AW breeding area in Lower Oder Valley National Park, the birds select for areas with lower and less dense vegetation with higher insect abundance. Habitat quality is negatively affected by the cessation of land use and positively affected by removal of biomass by mowing. 80-90 % of the AW breeding areas in Lower Oder Valley National Park have been either mown or grazed in the year before occupation. Mosaic-like structures with early and late mown patches turned out to be appropriate in alluvial, nutrient-rich habitats.
- c) Are there any gaps? What limits further assessment of this factor's effects?
Missing information on breeding success

3.2.3. *Develop collaborative research and monitoring programmes between range-states*

- a) Is your country involved in international collaborative and monitoring programmes on the Aquatic Warbler?
 Yes No

- b) If yes, please provide brief details about on-going and completed projects. Which Aquatic Warbler range states are involved? What fields studied?
 National monitoring activities are coordinated between Germany and Poland in order to achieve a reliable monitoring of breeding numbers of the "Pomeranian Population".
 Participation in monitoring planning of the EU-LIFE-Nature project "Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany" (2005-2010) – ornithological, botanical, hydrological and entomological monitoring schemes for project countries Poland and Germany. German experts are strongly involved both in the expeditions and analytical work of the AWCT (see also 3.1.4).
- c) What are the main findings and conservation implications?
- d) What are the gaps and what is needed to address them?
 An elaborated research strategy specifically addressing the information needs of conservation of wintering habitats and the "Pomeranian population" should be developed without delay.

4.0 PUBLIC AWARENESS

4.1. To ensure development of a strong network of organisations and individuals committed to the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler

- a) Does a network of organisations/individuals committed to the conservation of the Aquatic Warbler exist in your country?
 Yes No
- b) If Yes, how broad is this network and what organizations/individuals are taking the lead in facilitation and coordination of its development?
- Leadership: Brandenburg State Office for Environment
 - Department of Large Protected Areas and Regional Development
 - Administration of the National Park "Lower Oder Valley"
 - Brandenburg State Bird Conservation Centre
 - Greifswald University
 - NABU / BirdLife Germany
 - ABBO (part of NABU / BirdLife Germany)
 - Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (German members, German chairman)
 - National Park rangers and volunteers
 - "Association of Friends of the Polish-German Europe-National Park Lower Oder Valley"
 - "Association of Friends of Nature Conservation in Peene Valley" ("Förderverein Naturschutz im Peenetal e. V.") and Administrative Union Peene Valley Landscape ("Zweckverband Peenetal-Landschaft")
 - Land owners and farmers
- c) What actions does your country undertake to broaden the circle of organisations and individuals committed to conservation of Aquatic Warbler?
 Organisations involved are sufficient but there is always need of more volunteers.
- d) What successful experience can other Range States draw on?
 AW conservation is not feasible without an efficient network.
- e) What would be needed to establish a network if it does not already exist or to improve an existing one?
 Leadership by a well-experienced and well-organised staff.
 For the Pomeranian population the employment of a 'Pomerania Site Manager' would be crucial to co-ordinate further AW conservation. The survival of the German population is completely dependent on a vital population on the Polish side.

- f) In the table attached (Annex II), please list key people in your country (scientists, conservationists, etc.) who are dealing with Aquatic Warbler conservation, research and implementation of the Aquatic Warbler MoU and Action Plan.

4.2. To use the Aquatic Warbler as a flagship species

Has the Aquatic Warbler been used as a flagship species in your country for the inventory and protection of wetlands?

Yes No

If Yes, please briefly describe how and provide examples if available.

- AW is one of the target species of the National Park “Lower Oder Valley”
- EU-LIFE-Nature projects “Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany” (2005-2010) and Improvement of the breeding and feeding habitats for the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) as well as for the Corn Crake (*Crex crex*) and the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) in the SPA “Schorfheide-Chorin” (2012-2017)
- In the federal state of Brandenburg, the AW is considered one of three high priority bird species.
- In May 2014, a Polish-German workshop on AW conservation was held in Criewen, Brandenburg. One of the results was a resolution to ministries and relevant authorities in Poland and Germany in order to stress the dramatic situation of the “Pomeranian population” and the necessity for more conservation efforts.
- AW was subject of a lot of contributions in the media.

If No, what limits promotion and use of the Aquatic Warbler as a flagship species and how does your country plan to address this?

4.3. To prepare educational materials promoting and giving information

- a) Have any educational and promotional materials about Aquatic Warbler been developed in your country?

- Yes, specifically devoted to the Aquatic Warbler.
 Yes, the Aquatic Warbler is included into materials with a broader context.
 No, Aquatic Warbler is not covered in educational and promotional materials.

If Yes, please describe the nature of such materials and how they were disseminated. Please give reference to published materials if available.

A leaflet focusing on AW conservation in the Lower Oder Valley was published in 2009 as part of a Testing and Development Project „Habitat Conservation and Restoration for the Globally Threatened Aquatic Warbler using Novel Approaches in Wet Grassland Management in the Lower Oder Valley“ (Funding: Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, BfN) with funds of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety).

PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Please report on the implementation of the country-specific actions listed for your country in Part II of the Action Plan and provide information if this is not already covered by your answers under Part I. Please describe not only the measures taken but also their impact on the Aquatic Warbler or its habitat in the context of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. Where you have already answered on country-specific actions in Part I, please only add a reference to the relevant answer here.

According to the Action Plan as of 2003, the following actions are covered under Part I of this report:

- 2.1.1. *Prepare and implement habitat management plans in Brandenburg, especially in the lower Odra valley.*
- 3.1. *Monitor the population.*

The following actions are not covered under Part I of this report:

- 2.2.6. *Encourage low-density grazing (1–2 cattle/ha) with the native breed of cows at Aquatic Warbler sites after June, especially at the Baltic Sea coast.*

Not implemented.

- 2.4. *Promote habitat restoration in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (especially at potential breeding sites such as Peenetalmoor, Grosser Wotig, Struck and Kooser Wiesen) and Brandenburg, where at least 2,000 ha is suitable for recolonisation. The managers of the Lower Odra National Park should restore habitats for the Aquatic Warbler, in particular because this species could suffer from habitat losses following restoration of alluvial forests.*

Habitat restoration in Peenetalmoor was implemented within the LIFE project „Conserving *Acrocephalus paludicola* in Poland and Germany“ (see above). Grosser Wotig and Struck are not covered by restoration projects, and Karrendorfer / Kooser Wiesen is likely to be unsuitable for restoration of the required habitat types.

Creation of 200 ha of suitable habitat in the Lower Oder Valley National Park was part of the Testing and Development Project (2009-2014). An action plan for the AW in the federal state of Brandenburg is in existence since 2011, focussing on AW-friendly management of the last breeding-site and restoration of potentially suitable sites.

Annex I

Name of the site, geographical coordinates	Status (B – breeding, W – wintering P – passage)	Aquatic Warbler population supported (vocalizing males (breeding) or individuals (migration or wintering))	Year of survey	Total area of the site	Area of the site under protect ion	Type of protection	Does protection level fully reject possible detrimental developments? [Yes/No]	Site Managem ent Plan (D – developed, A - approved, I – implemented)
National Park Lower Oder Valley (State of Brandenburg) 52°59'N 14°09'E	B	0-3	annually 2010- 2014	10500 ha	10500 ha	National Park; IBA; SPA	No	Yes
Lower Peene Valley (Unteres Peenetalmoor, Peenehaffmoor) (State of Mecklenburg – Western Pomerania) 53°51'N 13°47'E	B	0	annually 2010- 2014	27800 ha (for AW only 800 ha suitable)	27800 ha	partly Nature Reserve (Naturschutzgebiet); IBA; SPA	No	No
Freesendorfer Wiesen/Halbinsel Struck (State of Mecklenburg – Western Pomerania) 54° 9' 55" N, 13° 41' 59" E	B	0	annually 2001- 2005	ca. 600 ha (terrestrial area)	ca. 600 ha (terrest rial area)	Nature Reserve (Naturschutzgebiet); IBA; SPA	No	No

Name	Title	Field of interest	Position, Organization	Contact address and email	Comments
Franziska Tanneberger	Dr	Breeding habitat conservation restoration; re-establishment of German breeding population	Greifswald University	Institute of Botany and Landscape Ecology Soldmannstrasse 15 D-17487 Greifswald tanne@uni-greifswald.de	
Jochen Bellebaum	Dr	Breeding habitat conservation restoration; re-establishment of German breeding population; population biology	NABU/BirdLife Germany	Wiesenstrasse 9 D-16278 Angermünde ++49 3331 296517 Jochen.Bellebaum@t-online.de	
Martin Flade	Dr	Global population development, global conservation strategy for AW; migration and wintering sites of AW; restoration of potentially suitable AW habitats in Brandenburg	Brandenburg State Office for Environment (LUGV), Director of the Biosphere Reserve Schorfheide-Chorin	LUGV, GR-3, Hoher Steinweg 5-6, D-16278 Eberswalde ++49 3331 365431 Martin.flade@lugv.brandenburg.de	