

Minutes of the AWCT Meeting on 10th May 2010 at Goniądz, Poland

Start 14:45 h

1. Welcome and introduction

2. Short update country by country

Lars Lachmann (LL), Poland:

on LIFE and LIFE+ briefly,
Michal Maniakowski (MM) on the 2009 results.

Zydrunas Preiksa (ZP), Lithuania:

Awaiting the confirmation for the applied LIFE project (already short-listed, will be adopted at high probability). The AW numbers in the last two years were similar, but at some places decrease and deterioration due to overgrowing.

Franziska Tanneberger (FT), Germany:

Strong decline, in 2007 still 10sm in Lower Oder NP, 2008 just 1 sm in mid-May, and in 2009 nothing, however several habitats look good and are well managed. A species management plan for the Federal State of Brandenburg is being produced by the end of 2010.

Oskars Keiss (OK), Latvia:

They also hope for the LIFE project application. There was an attempt with tape-luring for the first time and they caught 1 bird. Exceptionally high water – thus hope for AW in the known potential areas.

Anatoliy Poluda (AP), Ukraine:

Plan to continue monitoring at the 6 key sites, but they had in 2009 problem with funds, now it looks more promising - they have a project, and hope to carry on with AW monitoring.

May be next year they will have the biomass project and another one starting 2010 on pilot geolocator application in the Supoy population.

Actual figure of Ukraine population: 2008-2009 estimated 4,200 .

Last year they found two new sites with several hundred AW in the lower Stochid floodplain.

Zsolt Végváry (ZV), Hungary:

Two population crashes in recent years because of flooding, but population is still there, 2010 seems to have optimal water conditions.

2009: 270 sm

Interesting cooperation with Jakub Glapan/Poznan on AW song; a few days ago a sm with metal ring was discovered, they will try to capture it.

Arnaud Le Nevé (AL), France:

New French SAP was elaborated, from 2011 targeted to measure habitat quality for resting and fuelling; currently 200 known stopover sites, partly very large (Loire and Seine estuary); use of satellite image data for a cheap large-scale monitoring system.

3. Situation in Africa / Expedition to Mali in 2010/11 (MF)

Until now we know just 1 wintering site (Djoudj area), some other suitable habitats found in Senegal delta, but that time they were too dry, they may be occupied during wetter months. In the area visited this year by Volker Salewski, Ibrahima Diop and colleagues in Diawling NP /Mauritania mist-netting was unsuccessful and water table was lower than usual, as locals wanted to fight *Typha* with drying the sites. Birds arriving in Oct-Nov probably moult around beginning of November, just after arrival. Cosima Tegetmeyer (CT; PhD student) didn't managed to catch AW in November because of huge areas were flooded and very low bird densities (as all the rice fields were full of water).

Karl Schulze-Hagen (KSH) adds that AW loose flight feathers very quickly, and tail-feathers even in 1 day, so they are nearly flightless for a short period of time (= fast moulders).

Options for AWCT expedition 2010/2011:

a). Diawling/Mauretania in early winter 2010

Pro: we know that there is suitable (but in late winter too dry habitat), Parc is interested to "get" the species (political meaning, not biological) and water management could be influenced;

Contra: too difficult to organise two trips, to Mali and Diawling, so we need to choose (MF) → may be we can do the Diawling in cooperation with French ringers (eg ACROLA team) when there is enough water, should be followed up (LL); close to other existing AW populations.

b) Mali in January 2011

In the inner Niger delta several large potential areas were identified by the RSPB's remote sensing research, they revealed unstudied habitats, however the habitat is difficult to access, but we can try to organise a high catching effort. Before January, water levels are usually too high (0.5-1 m; later in most areas livestock follows the dropping water levels). Diallo Mori (DM) mentions that the habitat in Djoudj is similar to the Djoudj area. He suggests working in three operation teams.

Pro: Diallo Mori can organise ringers/helpers; possibly AW protection zones could be created.

Contra: risky to go there without clearer indication that AW are there (MF) and a clear target area (*Comment: this situation has changed in the meanwhile, since we got very precise information and pictures on excellent habitats in the southern delta and on the border to Burkina Faso; MF*)

c). Geolocator project 2010/2011:

MF explains geolocators and the progress; at the moment we have just a prototype, and in May we hope to get the final geolocators and want to test them in Supoy – two sample groups including a control group, the precision is +-50-70km, which would be good in scale for Africa; we can also check the possible Balkan flyway and connections with the Hungarian population (*Comment 16.07.2010: successful fieldwork in Supoy finished, 30 geolocators and 16 controls are flying!*)

Jochen Bellebaum (JB) stresses that we need to make sure that the problem of equinox is not a problem. MF explains that the new ones are better than the ones used before and should be fine, as they can measure exact time and angle of sunrise; geolocators will be put in the field in vegetation for calibration of the loggers on AW.

Summary:

- Geolocators we will try anyway (30 birds plus control group).
- We will try a trip to Mali in January, but we want to check habitat suitability with the satellite analysis results first. Could be a combined trip of ACROLA and AWCT.

4. Ringing issues:

Michal agreed as coordinator from AWCT of colour ringing; we agreed to avoid colour ringing on Supoy birds (not to overweight the birds).

Ringing in Africa by the French and Spanish ringers was so far rather untargeted, the French agreed that we should have rules (guidelines) for ringing in Africa.

Organised local AW catching would satisfy birders, not occasional ringer-twitchers

MF should consult Ibrahima Diop and his brother (potential local ringer) (LL)

Short coffee break

5. AWCT website

MF stresses that Uladzimir Malashevich (UM) needs the contribution of all AWCT members

LL: adds that the website is done very well, great that it is updated, very valuable resource of reports etc. → **everybody who prepares information should provide it to the webmaster**

6. Priority project funding list

LL presents the current list and explains how priorities are set. Marco Barbieri (MB) adds that there is a need to check whether the list is considered seriously by CMS or not; personal feeling: if we do not expect that major new projects materialise, not to be adopted by CMS, it is a too loose mechanism

LL: no major revisions since last MoU, it was foreseen that it could be changed, but has not been necessary yet.

MF: having actions on the list helps very much to access funding (DEFRA, Otto for Africa)

→ list should not be too open, targeted for a time frame of 3-4 years.

Breeding sites / comments

MF: already approved projects (e.g. 3 projects in Belarus and Ukraine funded by the German government/BMU) should be deleted from the list (and remark of the minute taker: the project is not funded by KfW, but by BMU through KfW, and it is implemented together with Michael Succow Foundation and BL partners in BY and UA)

JB: 7 should refer only to the main project (pilot study is already funded)

ZP: Lithuania is 2.1 mio Euro

MF: action 8 is based on action plan for Brandenburg, funding needed

FT: Brandenburg MP refers only to Brandenburg, satellite data analysis can be enlarged to Western Pomerania as part of the Polish SAP

LL: is 5 (satellite analysis in Russia) still relevant?

MM: results of L. Kuczynski should be discussed and may be enlarged to UA/BY/RUS, at least cheap; easier to do it for adjacent parts of RUS (lack of presences in RUS)

ZP: it is very likely that there are a few AW in Kaliningrad region, could be possible to prove that Russia has AW → FT: should be on the list

Migration sites/comments

JKr: Spain, action needed outside La Nava? Donana protected, but does the current habitat management favour AW? → **French colleagues should be consulted**

LL: synopsis of ringing data should be done, funding envisaged by Belgian/British sources.
 MF: migration habitat improvement in France to be taken in mind, but not (yet) to be added on the list.

Wintering sites/comments

MF: geolocator study possibly partly funded by Schmidt-Felsche-Stiftung (will be decided in May), 21,000 missing for extension of the work in the next years, starting from 2011.
 JB: potential conservation work in Africa should be included already.
 M. Barbieri: next meeting 2013, put only concrete actions until 2013 into the list.

General/comments

SO: population model??? → JB: ideas developed further, especially necessary for small isolated population → SO: better to identify first the data needed and assess to what extent literature data can be used and what additional fieldwork would cost.
 ZV: include also spatial information
 LL: wording should be revised, details to be provided in comments, **JB and SO to help LL**
 ALN: analysis with Frederic Jiguet on productivity based on ringing data - constant decrease?
 ZV: shouldn't we reconsider Siberian fen mires in times of climate change?
 → can anybody obtain good predictions?

7. Important items for MoU COP:

LL: new range states (22 instead of 15 - new states Slovakia, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Marocco, Mauritania, Mali)
 OK: Czech republic to be included? Only very old records, not a regular site, but should be kept in mind.

8. Any other business:

Nothing

Franziska Tanneberger