

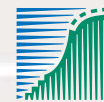
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# Waterbirds around the world

A global overview of the conservation,  
management and research of the  
world's waterbird flyways

*Edited by G.C. Boere, C.A. Galbraith and D.A. Stroud*

*Assisted by L.K. Bridge, I. Colquhoun, D.A. Scott,  
D.B.A. Thompson and L.G. Underhill*



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*Cover photography:* Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* arriving at Martin Mere, England. Photo: Paul Marshall.  
([www.paulmarshallphotography.com](http://www.paulmarshallphotography.com))

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## 3.2 Waterbirds in the Neotropics. Workshop Introduction

Melanie Steinkamp<sup>1</sup> & Roberto Schlatter<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, 11510 American Holly Drive, Room 206C, Laurel, Maryland 20708, USA.

<sup>2</sup>Instituto de Zoología, Universidad Austral de Chile, Casilla 567, Valdivia, Chile. (email: rschlatt@uach.cl)

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In some regions of the world there is a long history of survey and monitoring of waterbirds, leading to a well-developed understanding of distribution of waterbirds, their status and trends, and the locations of important sites. Throughout the Neotropics however, knowledge of waterbirds, their habitats and ecology, is much more limited, as a consequence of much less data and information.

Many of the papers presented in this workshop describe essential surveys that describe the distribution and numbers of waterbirds so that appropriate conservation measures can be developed. These include surveys in Costa Rica (Quesada), Panama (Sánchez *et al.*), Colombia (Naranjo *et al.*), Brazil (Kober), and Chile (Aparicio).

Generally, a major issue in the Neotropics is a major lack of funding for basic surveys and population monitoring. However, opportunities for funding surveys and conservation can vary between taxa. Whilst significant attention has been focussed on the needs of long-distance, intercontinental migrants, there has been much less research and conservation activity on waterbirds that migrate solely *within* South America. Many of these intra-continental migrant species, and non-migratory waterbirds have poor conservation status and largely unknown populations trends. This is especially the case for Neotropical migrant and resident waterbirds (especially waders) since international sources of funding are not readily available for monitoring, research and conservation.

The progressive development of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network has been an important initiative to raise awareness of the importance of key sites. The role of such areas, their identification and conservation is described from Mexico by Vega *et al.*, for Colombia by Naranjo *et al.*, with the recent development of a more strategic national approach for waterbird conservation in Argentina outlined by Goldfeder & Blanco. The recently established Hemispheric Steering Group for migratory waterbirds, established following the Western Hemisphere Migratory Bird Conference in Chile in 2004, has considerable potential to drive forward conservation activities.

The Symposium presented an overview of existing actions for waterbird flyways in central and South America, and discussed progress to date. A general point which was stressed was an urgent need to update IUCN Red-listings for South America to better reflect the current situation.



The population of Peruvian Pelican *Pelcanus thagus* is currently increasing and expanding its range. Photo: Chris Wilson.