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# Waterbirds around the world

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

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landbouw, natuur en  
voedselkwaliteit



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



EDINBURGH, UK: THE STATIONERY OFFICE

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First published in 2006 by The Stationery Office Limited  
71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AZ, UK.

Applications for reproduction should be made to Scottish Natural Heritage,  
Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, UK.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 11 497333 4

Recommended citation:

Boere, G.C., Galbraith, C.A. & Stroud, D.A. (eds). 2006.  
*Waterbirds around the world*. The Stationery Office, Edinburgh, UK. 960 pp.

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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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### 3.4 Intra-African migration. Workshop Introduction

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Sylla, I. & Dodman, T. 2006. Intra-African migration. Workshop Introduction. *Waterbirds around the world*. Eds. G.C. Boere, C.A. Galbraith & D.A. Stroud. The Stationery Office, Edinburgh, UK. p. 217.



Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus oncorhynchus* roost together at very great densities at the Doudj National Park in Senegal. Photo: Sergey Dereliev.

Many of Africa's migratory and resident waterbirds have poor conservation status and largely unknown population trends. Whilst there has been some research and conservation of migratory birds in Africa, this has focussed largely on African-Eurasian migrants, and the status and needs of most intra-African migrants are much less clear.

The workshop aimed to identify actions that would be important to promote development of research and conservation of intra-African migrants and resident waterbirds, including through the implementation of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. It reached the following recommendations:

#### Identifying actions needed for the conservation of intra-African migratory waterbirds

A key issue that hampers the conservation of African waterbirds is a limited knowledge of their conservation needs, particularly related to their movements, which are often unpredictable. It is also difficult to identify key site networks in some areas, due to the irregular but important role of temporary wetlands. In order to promote development of research and conservation of African waterbirds, the following recommendations are proposed. These are drawn largely from the issues affecting intra-African migration presented in the workshop and subsequent discussions. Dodman & Diagana provide further information about intra-African migration:–

- 1 Improve our knowledge of the status of African waterbirds and their migratory patterns through:
  - Applied research of weather patterns, site conditions and waterbird seasonality;
  - Extending the African Waterbird Census to other seasons and other areas;

- Use/analysis of existing African Waterbird Census and other data to identify site linkages and migratory patterns;
- Increased adoption of satellite telemetry (Childress *et al.* gives an example as to the value of this technology in elucidating sites networks for Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*);
- Initial conservation focus on a series of 'high profile species';
- Monitoring, research and conservation of threatened species (Young's description of research on the ecology of Madagascar Teal *Anas bernieri* is a good example of what is needed); and
- Development of AFRING.

- 2 Identify key sites and site networks for intra-African migrants, especially threatened species (Mlingwa & Baker highlight the key importance of networks of sites for Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor* in the soda lakes of Tanzania).
- 3 Develop Species Action Plans for African waterbirds.
- 4 Promote increased focus on intra-African migrants in the implementation of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement.
- 5 Adopt a precautionary principle; it is often necessary to implement conservation action before knowing the full picture.
- 6 Enhance awareness of African waterbirds, especially their values and ecological roles.
- 7 Highlight the plight and lack of knowledge of threatened African waterbirds.
- 8 Mobilise resources for conservation and monitoring of intra-African migrants, especially through development and subsequent implementation of a Conservation Strategy for African Waterbirds.