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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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*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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### 3.5 Flyway conservation in the Central Asian Flyway. Workshop Introduction

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Wetlands International - South Asia, A-25, 2nd Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi - 110 024, India.

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The permanent wetlands of the Karakum desert in Turkmenistan are of great importance for waterbird populations migrating through this region. Photo: Sergey Dereliev.

The Central Asian Flyway covers a large continental area of Eurasia between the arctic and Indian Oceans. This flyway comprises several important and overlapping migration routes for different species of waterbirds, most of which extend from Siberia to south and southwest Asia. The limited existing information that is available on waterbird populations needs to be strengthened, but existing data appears to show that many species are declining. The semi-arid condition of the Central Asian region and the effects of climatic changes observed on wetlands there have considerable impacts on the distribution and status of waterbirds, as described by Kreuzberg-Mukhina.

Most of the countries along this flyway have developing economies or economies in transition, and the focus of governments is to improve the living standards and conditions of their peoples. Accordingly, there is an inadequate allocation of resources for research and conservation, and for the involvement of local stakeholders in the sustainable management of wetlands. In addition, changes in political systems and instabilities in some countries, language and other barriers, have hindered co-operation to be developed between the agencies of the countries within the flyway. Thus there has been more limited co-operation in information sharing, research and conservation activities compared to other flyway systems or geographical regions.

The symposium made the following recommendations:

- An international framework for the development of conservation initiatives for migratory waterbirds and wetlands in the Central Asian Flyway is urgently required to promote co-operative action.
- An Action Plan for wetland and migratory waterbird conservation for the Central Asian Flyway identifying regional priorities should be finalised and endorsed by the governments of the region, in co-operation with other major stakeholders (e.g. multi-lateral environmental conventions, non-governmental organisations and others). Implementation of the plan will require active participation and resources from agencies within and outside the flyway.
- A network of internationally important sites in the Central Asian Flyway should be established to raise awareness and promote the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands in the context of sustainable development.
- Trans-boundary wetland and waterbird projects should be developed with international support, involving local agencies and organisations in each participating country.
- Strong networks of people in each country within the flyway should be established for undertaking surveys and monitoring waterbirds and their habitats.
- Key threatened species which need immediate attention should be short-listed and conservation efforts for them initiated.