

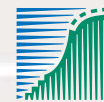
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Waterbirds around the world

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.
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5.3 Building effective ecological networks. Workshop Introduction

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Lake Durankulak on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is one of the major wintering areas for Red-breasted Geese *Branta ruficollis*. The species is has only ever been recorded from 115 sites worldwide and of these 70% qualify for Ramsar designation. The long-term viability of this species will depend on the conservation of these ecologically linked sites. Photo: Sergey Dereliev.

Flyway-level conservation requires attention to site networks, not just individual sites. Such wide-scale consideration (sometimes at continental scales) provides a practical challenge to planners and managers. Among other problems and constraints are limited resources, patchy data, restricted opportunities for new designations of protected sites, and the wide distributions of migratory species in space and time. Especially in response to the latter, with the advent of climate-mediated distributional shifts, approaches to the creation of site-networks are required that have a dynamic quality: with processes that allow regular assessment of effectiveness – and adaptation to ‘fine-tune’ effectiveness.

The symposium reviewed and discussed different approaches to: identifying key sites; building a coherent ecological network; linking site networks with the Convention on Biological Diversity’s ‘ecosystem approach’; recognition and

practical conservation of site networks. Examples of national (or wider) networks were reviewed from the UK (Baker & Stroud), the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (Duncan), as well as in the context of the specific needs of individual species such as for Lesser White-fronted *Anser erythropus* and Red-breasted Geese *Branta ruficollis* (Dereliev), Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* (Bechet *et al.*), as well as for Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* (Prentice *et al.*).

Pritchard stressed that the objectives of a site network must foster a synergy of the functions and values of its parts. The objectives (and strategies) of key site networks should have a sound scientific basis, so that it can be a credible statutory objective and a yardstick for measuring success. Pritchard challenged the workshop to be more specific about the ecological meaning that underpins our network concepts, including as related to site network coherence within existing legal frameworks.