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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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6.2 Let the waterbirds do the talking. Workshop Introduction

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Prietto, C. 2006. Let the waterbirds do the talking. Workshop Introduction. *Waterbirds around the world*. Eds. G.C. Boere, C.A. Galbraith & D.A. Stroud. The Stationery Office, Edinburgh, UK. p. 831.



The launch of an educational booklet on the critically threatened Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* at Fereydoon Kenar city in Mazandaran Province of I.R. Iran as part of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. Communication, education and public awareness is an essential component to such programmes. Photo: Crawford Prentice.

Waterbirds, through their often charismatic behaviour, their international migrations, and association with ‘untamed nature’ have great potential to increase support for biodiversity conservation at all levels.

The processes of communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) are all invaluable complements to waterbird conservation but must be valued and funded accordingly. Conservation efforts may not realise their intended aims without CEPA.

The workshop was constructed to present a range of strategies, products and initiatives that deliver educational outcomes among various target audiences. This range of examples, presented in the papers that follow was significantly broader than what is normally considered under the classification of communication, education and public awareness.

The ultimate aim of those working for the conservation of waterbirds and their wetland habitats is to increase support for

biodiversity conservation across all sectors of society. The CEPA workshop aimed to show that these processes produce real outcomes on their own but also add value to other conservation activity more generally. However, CEPA strategies and products must be tailored to the framework and needs of the target audience: a high degree of targeting is necessary to ensure successful outcomes.

A number of the presentations and following papers summarise information on formal and community educational programs, community events, networks and partnerships.

All speakers emphasised the value of these initiatives in increasing support for conservation efforts and strongly underscored the need for adequate funding.

Participants agreed that there is a need for communication components to be fully integrated with management efforts. Even in a conference such as this it would have been good to have relevant CEPA papers slotted into other presentations.