

# UK SPA SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

## 28 January 2004

### **Ramsar Review: work programme and timetable for UK avian elements**

#### **Background**

In the context of the Strategic Framework and Guidelines for the Future Development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Resolution VII.11), the UK has undertaken to review the coverage of wetland habitats and species across the existing and candidate site series and make recommendations to address any shortfall.

To contribute to the vision for the List the UK aims to develop and maintain a national network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the ecological and hydrological functions they perform. In order to achieve this aim, the UK will give priority attention to the listing of wetland habitat types recognised as under-represented in the List (specifically coral reefs, mangroves, sea-grass beds, peatlands and wet grasslands) and globally threatened wetland species.

The aim for the Ramsar site review is to agree a list of proposed new or revised designations and report this to CoP9 in 2005. Tied into this will be the update of Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) and site maps to be submitted to the Ramsar Bureau for CoP9.

The Ramsar Review Steering Group will have responsibility for overseeing the Ramsar review in the UK and its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

To assist in the Ramsar Review, Defra has requested that the SPA SWG advises on the avian elements and this has been agreed by the Ramsar Review Steering Group. To clarify the role of the SPA SWG, its Terms of Reference have been amended to include Ramsar issues considered appropriate to its remit. Once the new Terms of Reference have been adopted (expected in January 2004) the Group will become known as the UK Special Protection Area & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group (SPAR SWG).

This paper is designed to provide a brief outline of the work that the SPAR SWG will undertake and the timetable for completing elements necessary for the current review process.

### **Work areas that the SPAR SWG will undertake**

The areas of work identified by the Ramsar Review Steering Group for consideration by the SPAR SWG are broadly described as follows:

- To consider and make recommendations on proposed revisions to the Ramsar network as a result of the 2001 SPA Review, taking into account issues that are under review in developing the UK SPA network.
- To review BirdLife's Ramsar/IBA analysis, taking into account common issues that relate to the ongoing work on developing the UK SPA network, and provide recommendations on any desirable changes to the UK Ramsar network for birds.

### **Responsibilities and the timetable for consultation**

JNCC will take the lead on assessing the changes to be made in relation to the SPA Review. The Ramsar Review Steering Group has already agreed that the species listed for Ramsar sites will reflect the 2001 SPA Review, but that the data used for the updating the RIS will be based whenever possible on more contemporary data (in particular from WeBS). The Ramsar Review will also reflect any relevant changes to the SPA network made since the 2001 SPA Review was published.

JNCC has also been tasked by the Ramsar Review Steering Group to review the BirdLife Ramsar/IBA analysis and present a discussion paper to the SPAR SWG at its May 2004 meeting. This review will rely on the 2001 SPA Review data.

The SPAR SWG will be consulted on both of these elements at its May 2004 meeting and is requested to provide advice in September 2004. Recommendations from the SPAR SWG will be needed in time for this to be included in the results of the Review to be presented to the Ramsar Secretariat before CoP 9 in 2005.