



Eyes on the Flyways conference

24.05.18 – Museum of Natural Sciences, Brussels

Main messages and conclusions

'Ensure cooperation, implement coordination!'

Session 1 Land use changes

- Member State authorities and stakeholders to implement the Species Action Plans.
- Member States to increase their environmental performance.
- Encourage governments, farmers and other land users / managers to implement more practices beneficial for nature by putting forward good examples.
- Encourage cooperation between different ministries within Member States to achieve increased cross-over between environmental and agricultural priorities.
- Increase cooperation from farmers and other sectors by enhancing the dialog with the public.
- Introduce more incentives for very profitable farmers.
- Incorporate the implementation of the Species Action Plans into the new CAP as an example of high standards.
- Translate some actions of the Species Action Plans into Natura 2000 management plans and actions, and make site managers aware that they can do more to conserve biodiversity.
- Enhance existing collaboration between EU and Africa and use the example to create new cooperation along the flyways.

Session 2 Threats in the sea

Fishermen want to catch fish, not birds!

- Member States need to be engaged in the by-catch dialogue, enforce legislation, and encourage the use bird-friendly equipment. The actions taken to tackle by-catch at an EU level need to be implemented at a national level.
- Researchers and NGOs also need to engage more and work more closely with fishermen.



- Enforce the newly reformed common fisheries policy and the Data Collection Framework which was revised in 2017, with 2018 being the first year of full implementation. Member States need to report on the incidental bycatch of bird species protected under the EU legislation and international agreements.
- Tackle data collection issue by introducing standardised protocols at EU level at least.
- By-catch mitigation measures need to be introduced by the EU, in particular for the Baltic Sea.
- Develop by-catch reduction gear for small-scale fishing.
- Develop and implement temporary measures while building relationships with fishermen.

Session 3 Sustainable hunting

- Develop understanding of hunters' behaviour and motivation.
- Sustainable hunting needs good data and good governance, strengthened monitoring, updated documents (e.g. on hunting season), and is bound by the precautionary principle. Species threatened with extinction like the European Turtle-dove require urgent action, with permanent measures being preferable to short-term temporary ones.
- When applying the precautionary principle, keep hunters involved and encourage them to put political pressure to recover the threatened species so it can be hunted again in the future.
- The hunting community needs to improve the quality of the data and bag statistics collected.
- When applying an Adaptive Harvest Model, build trust between stakeholders, look at the social systems in which the model will operate and combine the model with habitat management.
- Big knowledge gaps still exist. Very little is known about what happens to Turtle-doves in Africa. The adoption of the SAP by the CMS will keep the focus on the flyways.
- The EC is committed to support an AHM for the European Turtle-dove. It should be applied first to central and western flyways, while more information is needed on bag data in eastern flyway.

Session 4: MSAP

- Multi-species Action Plans are good to develop if there are specific conservation actions in common for all the species, but not worth writing when recommendations are too generalist.
- Multi-species Action Plans have already been produced in the past. They are catalysers of actions and priority setting when several species are in dire straits. A good example is the Vulture MSAP, which was developed to confront a serious vulture crisis, and was adopted by the CMS in record time. It is now being implemented through multiple projects and programmes across its range states. The strengthening of the Egyptian Vulture population in the Balkans is an example of this.
- Others like the Steppe Birds MSAP are being created to include all species in one particular habitat type, so as to not impact more common species by attempting to conserve threatened species.



Session 5: Implementation

- The LIFE EuroSAP project has contributed to the development of tools aiming to facilitate the implementation of Species Action Plans: SAP Tracking Tool online platform (www.trackingactionplans.org) and African-Eurasian Species Action Plan Coordination Group.
- Active Working Groups enhance the implementation of Species Action Plans. Time, money, and people are key factors for Working Groups to be active. Identifying a champion range state could help increase the impact of a Working Group.
- Working groups should include all principal range states, and should be flexible in their operation.
- Species Expert Groups can be a lighter alternative to Working Groups.

Session 6: Funding

Conservation work priorities for private donors:

- **MAVA:** applied research, monitoring and long-term conservation action.
- **Segré:** threatened species (EN, CR, VU), no geographic restrictions, aiming at concrete conservation on the ground with visible results. Prospects: holistic conservation approach. Proposals need to have clear benefits, costs, chances of success, urgency and measurable objectives.
- **Baltic Sea Foundation:** Aim: improving the ecological conditions of the Baltic Sea. Careful selection of proposals.

Conservation work priorities for intergovernmental institutions:

- **AEWA:** It is a legal framework that sets priorities for conservation, with a very structured approach in prioritising work. As such, there are no financial mechanisms available.
- **DG ENV:** Currently preparing for the next financial period with the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 in which there is an increased budget for the LIFE Programme.
 - EC support the coordination and collection of data, but MS monitoring should be under responsibility of MS not EC, and stakeholders should lobby if the governments don't act on this.
 - EC asked MS to present their PAFs. Stakeholders should think strategically and engage with the MS authorities in the next few months to include their priorities in the debate.
 - PECBM is a valuable indicator, but it is not easy finance in the long term.
 - There is a need for simple and cost effective models, and to be realistic in terms of the human and financial capacity required.

Final comments:

- **Funding for Africa:** EU services in African countries exist, for example through DEVCO
- **Policy:** SAPs play an important role in policy-making. Diagnostic tools can also be used to shape our policy work and describe problems.
- **Linking research and conservation action:** Horizon 2020 is a good example. Conservationists can also include research into their conservation project proposals and thus fund both aspects at the same time. The Conservation Evidence website is being created for this purpose: www.conservationevidence.com



- Reaching more communities: opportunities through EU funds, developing the European-Eurasian partnership, incorporating more conservation in the reasons [reserve] underpinning agricultural measures, putting forward pilot and preparatory actions and designating champions.