

## Single Species Specialist Groups

- and their potential role in the BiE3 and EBBA2 processes



Which international S.S.S.Gs do exist?, what are their aims?  
 What are their potential strengths and weaknesses?  
 How could they be integrated in the BiE3 / EBBA2 process?  
 Where could they really make a difference?

### Which international S.S.S.Gs do exist?, what are their aims?

**Species Action Plans** (some 60 species such as e.g. White-headed Duck, Sociable Plover, Bald Ibis)

safeguard declining species, stop their declines or turn their fate using international collaboration; organisation and funding by international bodies

**Species Specialist Groups** (unknown number of species, e.g. European Crane, White-tailed Eagle, White Stork)

safeguard a flagship species, monitor their populations, assess the usefulness of protection measures using a network of like-minded enthusiasts across borders

**Others: Scientific study groups** [usually no censusing], but what about international Barn Swallow study group?

### Examples of Single Species Specialist Groups

#### Ring Ouzel Specialist Group

Formed in UK, keeps contact with alpine and caucasian ornithologists discussing ecology, threats, field methodology etc.; but no pan-European projects envisaged, and no European-wide census existing

#### White Stork Specialist Group

Formed in Germany, keeps contact with ornithologists in whole range of species (ecology, conservation issues etc.); runs pan-European projects on regular basis, European-wide censuses every 10 years

#### strengths

- collaboration with all range countries
- some knowledge exchange
- coordinated reporting scheme
- increased effort to improve data
- knowledge about SAPs widespread

#### weaknesses

##### Species Action Plans

- often no real specialists
- interest in/time for exchange limited
- no coordinated censusing
- data quality sometimes rather low

##### Species Specialist Groups

- collaboration with peers in Europe
- massive knowledge exchange
- coordinated census scheme (some)
- improvement of data quality
- some specialists not involved
- funding/time for exchange limited
- no coordinated censusing (majority)
- functioning of group highly dependent on individual initiatives, often highly „instable“ (differing interests)
- may end with instigator's retreat
- knowledge about existing groups limited

### Where could SAPs/SSGs really make a difference?

- species difficult to census due to their **restricted activity times**, to difficulties in **finding leks, finding nests or traces of unobtrusive species** etc.
- species in difficult-to-access habitats (e.g. bogs, cliffs, high mountains); improvement of field methods & monitoring protocols
- species often missed during standardised, restricted census times
- species or forms, whose differentiation in the field is not well established yet (e.g. *Pterodroma* species)
- species where population estimates vary massively across countries
- species where cross-country discussions on which data to report are necessary to avoid unrepresentative or misleading data (e.g. aggregations of Sociable Plovers on steppes, or of Cranes and Geese)

### Possible integration in the BiE3 / EBBA2 process

- Collate list of well-functioning groups, collate list of all SAPs
- Contact group leaders and ask for collaboration
- Initiate species census within BiE3 and atlas periods or negotiate data delivery of latest census (if within respective period)
- Receive vital information on distribution of difficult species across Europe and of best survey methods
- Improve data quality, population estimates and modelling procedures during the BiE3 and EBBA processes by including locally precise distribution and abundance data
- Improve calibration of data from different countries by converging methodologies

### (pan-)European SSPs and their contacts

Grouse spp.	I. Storch	Germany
White Stork	H. Hötter/Bergenhusen	Germany
Black Stork	M. Strazds etc.	Latvia
Cormorant	R. Parz-Gollner, M. van Eerden	Austria, NL
Common Crane	H. Prange	Germany
Great Bustard	T. Langgemach	Germany
Aquatic Warbler	L. Lachmann	UK, Poland
Ring Ouzel	C. Rollie	UK

plus: Osprey, Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Gannet, Corncrake, Rock Partridge, Grey Partridge (and other IUCN groups, and BI groups)