

Wadden Sea Board

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According to the Leeuwarden Declaration WSFI should extend efforts on East Atlantic Flyway conservation to the Arctic regions. The preparatory meeting in Bonn on 30-31 October 2018 aiming for a planned workshop on bird conservation in Russia 2019 agreed that support is needed by WSB on how the TWSC initiative should contact and cooperate with appropriate partners playing an important role in the Arctic region.

Proposal: The Wadden Sea Board is invited to note the information, discuss and respectively endorse the approach to continue the efforts on extending the cooperation towards the Arctic.

Preparation WSFI Arctic workshop in Russia 2019

The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) started in 2012 to follow the request of the UNESCO *to strengthen cooperation on management and research activities with States Parties on the African Eurasian Flyways, which play a significant role in conserving migratory species along these flyways*. Since then many monitoring and capacity building activities in African countries along the East Atlantic Flyway (EAF) were successfully carried out and a strong network of governmental and non-governmental organisations from local to regional level has been developed. This network is the backbone of WSFI activities in Africa and the basis of conserving migratory birds along the EAF. With WSFI focus on Africa the breeding sites of Wadden Sea birds in the Arctic, still part of the EAF, has been disregarded.

The fact that WSFI's commitment in Arctic regions could be further strengthened was taken into account in the [Leeuwarden Declaration](#) (§5) where the ministers agreed *to continue and further consolidate the work on the Flyway Vision in the framework of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative with the relevant governmental and nongovernmental organisations and aim to extend the cooperation in the context of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, especially with regard to the Arctic, to continue monitoring along the entire flyway, to continue specific capacity building and to increase the activation of partners*.

In order to initiate and resume Arctic cooperation on protection and conservation of migratory birds a preparatory meeting with Russian and WSFI experts and managers was held in Bonn on 30-31 October 2018. Aim of this meeting was to prepare an outline for a planned workshop in Russia in 2019 with best possible results for future cooperation between WSFI and Arctic countries, esp. Russia.

At the Bonn meeting, the possible fields of cooperation in bird conservation in the Russian Arctic could easily be identified. The usage of satellite telemetry will produce valuable and necessary monitoring data, but also the inventory and collection of available Russian data on birds will improve knowledge on breeding sites and breeding success of Wadden Sea birds in the Arctic. Monitoring of breeding waders, geese and ducks in the field is and will still be important. In cooperation with protected areas in Russia (Zapovedniks) capacity and awareness building would lead to better management and improved information exchange. All discussed and proposed joint activities in the Arctic should strengthen the East Atlantic Flyway network and therefore the Wadden Sea bird populations.

As agreed in Bonn, there is an immediate need to establish a good contact to the Russian authorities since the workshop will be held in Russia. Furthermore, it will be appropriate to reach an understanding of the TWSC initiative in general with the biodiversity working group [CAFF](#) (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) of the [Arctic Council](#) under whose auspices the [AMBI](#) (Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative) project lies and to establish an equally good contact with this body. The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum of the Arctic States on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic with Denmark as member and Germany and the Netherlands as observer.

Regarding the latter, the fact that The Kingdom of Denmark is a full member of the Arctic Council and is represented in CAFF with two members leads to a possible conclusion that Germany and Denmark would undertake this "initial mission" in common, distributing the task as implied above.

The next step is to evaluate with relevant partners how to set up the cooperation and what could be the best way and level to initiate the first approach to the most appropriate working group under the Arctic Council, the CAFF and its AMBI project, regarding the TWSC initiative of linking WSFI with AMBI in general, and specifically to Russian authorities regarding this workshop.

It is therefore proposed that Germany on the basis of specific relation to Russia with regard to migratory birds and Denmark on the basis of its Arctic Council membership jointly undertake an initial task of creating the necessary connection as described, incorporating and making use of the existing Dutch liaisons in this respect

The Wadden Sea Board is invited to note the information, discuss and respectively endorse the approach to continue the efforts on extending the cooperation towards the Arctic.