

WLI Network Development in Russia: Federal and Local Protected Areas

Workshop of Wetland Link International-Russia

The Workshop of Wetland Link International-Russia was held on 1st February 2018 in Tver on a platform of the First All-Russian Ornithological Congress. 56 people from 16 regions of Russia, as well as the Republic of Belarus, Switzerland and UK – representatives of international, governmental, scientific and public conservation organizations including 13 state reserves and national parks – as WLI members as those interested in attendance to the network, took part in the workshop.

Organizers of the Workshop are: WLI-Russia, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Tver Region, Centre of Ecological Information of Tver Regional Scientific Library named after A.M.Gorky, Eco-Centre of Tver State University, Non-governmental Partnership “Birds and People”, Environmental Platform of All-Russian Civil Forum.

Co-chair of the First All-Russian Ornithological Congress Andrey Zinoviev, professor of Tver State University opened the workshop. Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of Tver Region Andrey Naumov welcomed the workshop. Then there were greetings from representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation - Ilya Prokhorov, Deputy Head of Information-Analytical Centre of Support of Protected Areas and Irina Martynyuk, head of Branch of Development of Protected Areas System of Department of Environmental Policy. Svetlana Volkova, deputy director of the Library talked in her welcome speech about the Library as reliable partner in implementation of ecological projects.

Tobias Salathe, Senior Advisor for Europe welcomed the workshop on behalf of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat. World Wetland Day-2018 is dedicated to role of urban wetlands and is carrying out under a slogan “Urban wetlands making cities livable”. In his address, Mr. Salate expressed hope that in future Tver becomes one of Ramsar cities, the list of which will be opened this year at the Conference of Parties of Ramsar Convention.

Continuing the theme, co-organizer of the workshop, Director of Eco-Centre of Tver State University Alexander Sorokin presented the project of creation in Tver the "Bird Eldorado" local reserve and wetland-centre for protection of urban wetland as key habitat of migratory birds.

Chris Rostron, WLI Global Coordinator presented the concept, current state and priorities of the Network of wetland education centres. Chris also showed the previous involvement of Russian WLI members into global network context like USA-Russia wetland centres staff visits and breath-taking “Flight of the swans” expedition, involved dozens of WLI partners in Russia and Europe.

Presentations from Birds & People (by Julia Gorelova), who arranged the WLI Workshop, and from Baltic Fund for Nature (by Eugene Genelt-Yanovsky and Julia Danilova) were aimed on presenting the ways in which regional, national and international networking can be useful for the organizations delivering CEPA activities around wetlands in Russia.

Since the workshop was held under auspices of the Ornithological Congress, most of reports were devoted to protection and monitoring of migratory birds, as well as environmental awareness-raising actions related to birds. The following WLI-Russia representatives also made their presentations (see Annex 1): Lev Shagarov, Natural Ornithological Park in Imeretinskaya Lowland; Dmitry Belyaev, National park “Smolenskoe Poozerie” and Anna Vozbrannaya, National Park “Meshchera”. In addition, representatives of protected areas who are interested in joining WLI-Russia made presentations as Baykalsky State Reserve (Yury Anisimov), Prioksko-

Terrasny State Reserve (Yury Buyvolov) and Central-Forest State Reserve (Nikolay Potemkin and Tatiana Primak).

2018 is announced as a Year of Volunteer in Russia. Presentations of Irina Pokrovskaya and Yury Anisimov were devoted to voluntary contribution in monitoring and ringing migratory birds on protected areas.

Presentation of Marina Mirutenko and Eugene Ravkin, Scientific Centre "Biodiversity Conservation" was devoted to key issues of classification and mapping of bird habitats and creation of regional wildlife cadaster.

In festive atmosphere WLI-Russia members were awarded by certificates confirming their membership in Wetland Link international. Participants welcomed the new member - Centre of Ecological Information of the Library.

Specially to the workshop, paintings by Moscow artists - participants of art-project "On the Trail of Red Book" presenting rare and endangered birds of Russia, was exhibited.

Participants approved proposed joint action plan-2018, which was included in Recommendations of the workshop (see Annex 2). The best occasion for such activities could be the World Migratory Bird Day in spring or World Birdwatch Day in autumn. WLI Network could bring the best practices from across the Globe of development of concept, educational infrastructure and set of activities at wetlands to become an active member of local societies.

In Recommendations, participants also noted importance of Russia's attendance to Afro-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA).

WLI-Russia is expanding network involving more and more members. And all of them are interested in development of international environmental cooperation, implementation of new educational programmes and support activities of the Russian Federation towards creation of new reserves and national parks on wetlands and giving high Ramsar status to lands of international conservation importance.