

Wetlands International Seaduck Specialist Group Meeting

Workshop on Baltic/North Sea Common Eider populations

also

Progress workshop on Steller's Eider

Second Announcement
and instructions for participants

17-21 April 2002
at Roosta Holiday Village, Estonia

Convened by the Wetlands International Seaduck Specialist Group
and National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark

organised by
the Estonian Institute of Zoology and Botany

Introduction

After the successful meeting in Denmark in December 2000, the Wetlands International Seaduck Specialist Group (SeSG) is organising a second major workshop in Estonia in April 2002. The meeting will be organised locally by the Estonian Institute of Zoology and Botany and will be based at Roosta (115 km from Tallinn) during 17-21 April 2002.

Because of the recent reports of catastrophic declines in Common Eider numbers in Northwest Europe, the main emphasis of the meeting will be a workshop on the population dynamics, status and distribution of this species in the Baltic and North Sea. Although restricted in geographical scope, we hope experts on the species from other parts of the world may also be interested in participating to provide their experiences from other populations and learn more of the conservation management problems faced by birds in this particular region. We are planning 3 major sections to the workshop; firstly, a session will be dedicated to an assessment of the numbers and distribution of the Common Eider throughout the Baltic and North Sea to provide some overview of its present and recent past status. We hope to then look in some depth at factors affecting breeding success in the species, bringing together the most recent results from a number of on-going long term studies to look at critical factors in the life cycle affecting reproductive success. Finally, we would like to structure a session devoted to winter ecology and factors affecting survival. The workshop will be along the lines of the scoter workshop of late last year, comprising a number of oral presentations with time for questions, but this time with more open sessions for discussion and synthesis of results from around Europe.

We very much hope that the contributions to the meeting will form the bulk of a publication, which will be published as a NERI Technical Report as soon after the meeting as is feasible. The workshop (and the publication) will be in English, and will also include material provided by some experts who are unable to attend the meeting. All speakers are asked (i) to supply a brief abstract before the meeting and (ii) to bring a copy of the manuscript from their presentation to the meeting as a contribution to the report. As part of the gathering, it is also hoped to convene a short meeting of the SeSG to discuss progress and Group business, and there will be an informal meeting of the Steller's Eider network given that so many Steller's Eider experts will be gathered in one place. Please let Tony Fox or Thomas Kjær (contacts below) know if any intending delegates would like to raise other issues at the meeting.

Eider Workshop

As with the scoter review in December 2000, we ask all Range States supporting Common Eiders in the Baltic and North Sea at some stage in their life cycle to provide some assessment of the status and distribution of the species in their countries. The programme will inevitably comprise a series of very short spoken presentations, but we do ask that all contributors provide a written transcript of their presentation for inclusion in the report. We are very keen that these talks provide the most up-to-date information on the following key elements:

- (i) the geographical range and timing of occupation
- (ii) identification of important breeding areas and a little about habitats used (including maximum and mean numbers, where appropriate)
- (iii) any known important spring/autumn staging or moulting areas (including maximum and mean numbers, where appropriate)
- (iv) any known important wintering areas (including maximum and mean numbers, where appropriate)
- (v) references to the results of any studies which have been carried out

(vi) although impossible to give populations trends overall, whether there are any studied areas where it might be possible to derive assessment of local or regional populations trends (e.g. disappearances from traditional areas, increases in others, changes in arrival dates)

(vii) any obvious or perceived threats (including any known outbreaks of Pasteurellosis or unusual observations of heavy parasite loads and their impacts on Common Eiders)

Obviously, for some areas, there will be only breeding numbers, for others purely passage birds, and elsewhere just wintering populations to describe, whilst some states support birds throughout the year. Division of the presentations into these elements would be helpful. We are aware that such information is simply not available for many areas, but this too, is an important feature of the workshop, since we need to identify the gaps in our knowledge. The idea is to draw together all these contributions in a synthesis of our knowledge. Hopefully, we shall end up with a Western European map of the breeding range, migration routes, moulting sites and wintering areas, with some indications of how many birds there are, and where they are, at the different stages of the life cycle. The big challenge is to determine a population trajectory for the species, something we are not in a position to achieve at present. We also wish to answer the questions: how can we monitor Eiders in Europe more effectively, and how can we generate trends for those sub-units, which seem to be suffering at the present? More importantly, if we are in a position to identify declines in numbers, we wish to establish reasons for the changes in numbers.

Under the theme of population dynamics, we hope to hear about studies from the breeding areas to assess trends in numbers and breeding success from specific areas. Given the number of groups involved with the study of this species on the breeding area, we are confident that there will be a wealth of material from which to synthesise. We are particularly keen to learn about factors affecting reproductive success, especially relating to body condition and parasite loads, if such data are available. In terms of the non-breeding season, we know relatively little about the moult period in Eiders; contributions on this subject would be especially welcomed. Migration routes and wintering areas of birds of particular breeding provenance are well known for some areas, unknown for others, some overview of our existing knowledge would again be helpful in linking factors operating on the wintering grounds with phenomenon occurring at remote nesting grounds. The winter situation is perhaps less well known, and this is one area where we hope to flag up the gaps in our existing knowledge. There will be some assessment of the hunting kill and the information to be derived from analysis of the hunting statistics, but we hope to be able to review more widely the causes of death in this species.

Will all intending participants please let Tony Fox have a title and abstract (<500 words) as soon as possible, so we can prepare a programme of spoken contributions and a booklet of abstracts for the meeting. Many thanks!

Eider Workshop publication

It is the major objective of the workshop to publish a synthesis of our existing knowledge relating to the Common Eider in the Western Palearctic. We hope that despite the enormous gaps in our knowledge, by gathering experts from around the globe, we can obtain the best available information to present in the form of a NERI Technical Report. Copies will be supplied free to all contributors, as well as being widely circulated and available for purchase. We very much hope this will become a source document for the coming years. Participants must bring their manuscripts with them to the conference if they are to be included in the Report. These must be in the form of a hard copy with original figures, and on a diskette in word-processed format (preferably Word 6 format, but others accepted). We ask that you observe the "Guidelines for authors" to Wildlife Biology as a guide to the format of the written presentations.

Steller's Eider Workshop

The meeting will include a major session devoted to Steller's Eiders. In 2001, the plan to develop a deep water port near Undva Cape (an important wintering site for > 1000 birds in Estonia) was dropped, several research projects have been completed (e.g. by-catch and winter ecology studies) and satellite transmitters have been deployed on birds in Norway, so there is great deal to report upon!

Venue

We will hold the meeting at the Roosta Holiday Village in Estonia. The site is located in a beautiful and undisturbed natural setting on the coast of the Baltic Sea. A number of protected areas are situated close to Roosta including the Silma Nature Reserve (proposed Ramsar site in 2002), Nõva Landscape Reserve and Leidissoo mire (proposed Ramsar site in 2002). Historically, the area was inhabited by a Swedish population, which was largely repatriated to Sweden during the Second World War. At present, this area of the Noarootsi ("New Sweden") Municipality is one of the most sparsely populated parts of Estonia. The closest town is Haapsalu – administrative centre of Läänemaa (Westland) county, located 35 km from Roosta. So the venue is a perfect place to gather together a group of specialists, undisturbed by the distractions of the outside world! The only distractions will be the wildlife around Roosta, which includes several excellent birding sites.

All meals and lecture facilities will be based at the conference centre. Accommodation can be arranged in cottages, which are situated around the main conference centre. Single-bedroom cottages have one bedroom with two beds plus two extra beds above the main bedroom. All cottages include a small kitchen corner with an oven, coffee maker, refrigerator and dinnerware for the convenience of delegates. Telephone, Satellite TV, shower, WC and electrical heating system are also standard features.

More details can be found at the web-site <http://www.roosta.ee/english/index.html>.

Proposed time schedule

Wednesday 17th April 2002 – arrival

Most flights to Tallinn International Airport arrive at 15:30-17:00 and 20:30-21:30, so we propose to organise **2 shuttle buses leaving at 16:30 and 21:30 (SAS Radisson Hotel) and at 17:00 and 22:00 (Tallinn Airport)** to take delegates from Tallinn to Roosta Holiday Village where delegates will register on arrival and where the workshop will take place.

Thursday 18th April 2002 – workshop sessions

At the Roosta Holiday village site, 10:00-22:00.

Morning: Welcome
 Wetlands International Seaduck Specialist Group General Meeting

Afternoon: Status reports for Common Eider from range states in the Baltic and North Sea

Evening: Interactive session to integrate available information on status and trends

Friday 19th April 2002 – workshop sessions

At the Roosta Holiday village site, 09:00-22:00.

Morning: Population dynamics – identification of factors limiting population size and determining survival and productivity

Afternoon: Migration routes and wintering areas of birds of particular breeding provenance

Evening: Steller's Eider progress workshop

Banquet 19.00-24.00

Saturday 20th April 2002 – workshop sessions and excursions

Workshop sessions at the Roosta Holiday village site, 09:00-15:00,

Morning: Overview presentations, rounding up and summarising workshop

...after which we propose delegates will disperse to take up the choice of two excursions to see Estonian wetlands.

Excursion A will be a short (half-day) visit the nature reserves at Matsalu and Silma, this excursion will be limited to a maximum of 20 participants, will occur from 15:30 until approximately 20:30 and participants will return to overnight in the Roosta Holiday Village.

Excursion B will be a longer (day and a half) visit the Matsalu nature reserve and Saaremaa Island. This will be limited to a maximum of 10 participants who will spend the night in Kuressaare. This excursion will join excursion A, departing Roosta at 15:30.

Saaremaa is an important staging area for Steller's Eiders and other seabirds.

Sunday 21st April 2002 – excursions and return travel for Excursion A

Excursion A participants: since most international flight departures from Tallinn occur around 12:30-15:30, so we propose a **shuttle bus leaving 10:00** from Roosta.

Excursion B participants: will spend the day touring on Saaremaa Island, arriving in the late evening to Tallinn where they will overnight in hotel accommodation.

Monday 22nd April 2002 –return travel for Excursion B

Excursion B participants: early flight departures from Tallinn start from around 5:30-8:00.

Costs

Costs	Workshop and Excursion A ¹	Workshop and Excursion B ²
Accommodation		
Lodging (two-bedroom cottage, 2x2 single beds)	65	50 (+50 ³)
<i>Supplement (one-bedroom cottage: 2 beds)</i>	25	20
Meals		
Lunch + Dinner, incl. banquet suppl. (5 Euros)	40	35
Workshop fee		
	60	60
Transport		
Shuttle buses Tallinn – Roosta (17th April: 17.00 & 22:00) and Roosta – Tallinn (21st April: 10:00)	30	15
Excursions		
	25 ⁴	85 ⁵
Total		
Workshop (no excursion)	195	
Workshop + excursion	220	295
Workshop + excursion (+Roosta lodging supplement)	245	315

¹Excursion A is half day tour of Matsalu and Silma Nature Reserves on 20th April, depart Tallinn airport 21st April

²Excursion B is one and a half day tour of Matsalu Nature Reserve and Saaremaa Island on 20th and 21st April, depart Tallinn airport 22nd April

³Extra lodging costs here (50 Euros) includes double room accommodation in Kuressaare/Hotel Stadion (20th April) and Tallinn/Hotel Susi (21st April). Single room supplement is 25 Euros for 2 nights.

⁴Price may increase if less than 15 participants

⁵Price does not include dinner on 20th April and lunch and dinner on 21st April, and may increase if less than 8 participants

Presentations

All communications will be in English. We hope to be able to offer overhead and slide projection facilities as well as a PC-projector for PowerPoint-type presentations. Please let tfo@dmu.dk know of any other specialist facilities you may require well in advance of the meeting.

Additional information

If you intend to attend the meeting, please complete the attached booking form and send (e-mail or post) it to Andres Kuresoo (Estonian Institute of Zoology and Botany, e-mail akuresoo@zbi.ee, telephone +372 7 373 012). For all enquiries relating to accommodation, travel arrangements and excursions, please contact Andres. Please submit a title and brief abstract of your proposed spoken contributions to Tony Fox or Thomas Kjær Christiansen (scientific co-ordination), Stefan Pihl (SeSG meeting), National Environmental Research Institute, Grenåvej 12, DK-8410 Rønne, Denmark (TF: telephone +45 89201505 or e-mail: tfo@dmu.dk; SP: + 45 89201506 or e-mail: sp@dmu.dk; TKC: telephone +45 89201516 or e-mail: tk@dmu.dk; fax +45 89201514 or +45 89201515 for all of us). For information on the scientific programme, news about the organisation of the meeting and workshops please contact Tony or Thomas. We look forward to seeing you all in Estonia!

Wetlands International Seaduck Specialist Group Eider Meeting

I intend to attend this meeting and wish to be booked into Roosta Holiday Village for the following (please tick):

- Workshop and excursion A (sharing 2-bedroomed cottage)
- Workshop and excursion A (1-bedroomed cottage)
- Workshop and excursion B (sharing 2-bedroomed cottage)
- Workshop and excursion B (1-bedroomed cottage)
- other arrangements (please explain precisely in a covering letter)

Name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

Country _____

Tel. _____ Fax _____

E-mail: _____

Arrival: Tallinn Airport: _____ Return _____

Other means of transportation:

Intend to participate in:

Seaduck Meeting Eider Workshop Steller's Eider

Please remember to attach a title, authors, addresses and brief abstract if you intend to submit a contribution to the programme

Please return this form no later than 10 February 2002 to:

Andres Kuresoo,
Estonian Institute of Zoology and Botany
Riia St. 181,
51014 Tartu,
Estonia
akuresoo@zbi.ee