

**MINUTES of MEETING
INTERCAFE @ Brussels 20-21 September 2004**

“INTERCAFE (COST 635) Kick-off Meeting”

**INTERCAFE meeting, COST Office, Avenue Louise 149, Brussels,
September 2004**

D. N. Carss (Editor)

COST Action 635 “INTERCAFE: Conserving Biodiversity – Interdisciplinary Initiative to Reduce pan-European Cormorant-Fisheries Conflicts”

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DAY ONE (20th September 2004) am: Plenary

(1) Emil Fulajtar, Science Officer for COST’s Environment Domain, opened the meeting officially and welcomed INTERCAFE participants. He noted that some COST countries interested in the Action had not yet signed the Memorandum of Understanding or nominated their national representative(s).

The Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action **635** was approved by the CSO on **16/02/2004**. The Action entered into force on **10/06/2004** when the MoU was signed by 5 countries. The lifetime of the Action will be 4 years after the first MC meeting which was held on **19/09/04** and it will thus end on **19/09/08**. The period within which COST member states can join this Action without any conditions being imposed, runs for twelve months from the first MC meeting, until **19/09/2005**.

If a COST country intends to participate in the Action and if this has not already been done, it is necessary to:

(a) send the nominations of up to two national representative(s), please transmit the name(s) and address(es) to the COST - ESF office; **only nominated representatives can be reimbursed.**

(b) implement the administrative procedure required to sign the Memorandum of Understanding of the Action as soon as possible.

The following items were then covered:

2. Adoption of the agenda – agreed by all.

3. Presentation of the delegations – each participant introduced themselves and their institution.

4. General information on COST mechanism and on the funding of coordination - items covered included history and structure of COST, ‘management’ mechanisms (e.g. Technical Committee, Management Committee, Work Groups), activities funded by COST, Memorandum of Understanding, evaluations (mid-term and final). Further details available from <http://cost.cordis.lu>

The SO presented to delegates the standard documents for implementation and management of COST Actions “Rules and procedures for implementing COST Actions” and “Rules and procedures for the Management Committee of the Action”. The delegates discussed these rules point by point and approved them without amendments.

The delegates agreed that English will be the working language of the Action.

The delegates decided that the COST Office will provide the secretariat services of this COST Action. The Scientific Secretary will be Dr E FULAJTAR.

5. Status of the COST Action – this information was gathered from the web pages. It was clearly incomplete and out of date.

ACTION ONE: David Carss and Mariella Marzano to liase with Emil Fuljatar to update database and follow-up countries that have not yet signed the MoU.

6. Election of Chair of the Action – participants agreed to follow the COST protocol whereby Actions are usually chaired by their proposers. David Carss thus gratefully accepted this position.

7. Reimbursement mechanism – presentation by Christoph Parske (Administrative Officer, Environment, Meteorology) – Christoph explained the importance of both signing the meeting’s attendance list every day and of completing the reimbursement forms correctly and on time in order to prevent delays in payment. He kindly offered to drop in during the meeting to help participants complete their forms.

DAY ONE (20th September 2004) pm: Plenary

Remaining sessions chaired by David Carss

8. Agreement on INTERCAFE Working Group management – participants unanimously agreed the following:

Vice-chairperson - Rosemarie Parz-Gollner

WG1 (Ecological databases and analysis)

Co-ordinator - Stefano Volponi

Co-coordinator - Stef Van Rijn

WG2 (Conflict resolution and management)

Co-ordinator - Thomas Keller

Co-coordinator - Kareen Seiche

WG3 (Linking science with policy and best practice)

Co-ordinator - Sandra Bell

Co-coordinator - Mariella Marzano

David Carss said that the candidates had been chosen on the basis of their disciplinary expertise, access to relevant databases, professional skills, wide experience of cormorant issues (including working with local stakeholders and policy makers), practical experience of human:wildlife or human:human conflicts and involvement in pan-European interdisciplinary projects. Names of proposed candidates had been circulated to all INTERCAFE participants early in 2004 and also to attendees prior to the current meeting for consideration.

9. Programme for the remainder of the meeting – was provided by David Carss. The remainder of the first day would be spent providing background and introducing the INTERCAFE project. Although some of this would be repetition for previous REDCAFE¹ participants, it would be useful for all, particularly new INTERCAFE participants – allowing them to hear about the philosophy of the project and providing an opportunity to provide input. INTERCAFE, like REDCAFE, will be as open as possible and will only be successful if stakeholders provided input. This was especially important for fisheries stakeholders, a very diverse group. Time would also be devoted to discussing the final outputs from REDCAFE (Volume II “National Profiles” and a short publicity leaflet). It was hoped that this work would both inform and include new INTERCAFE participants and set the scene for all. Day Two would be dedicated to INTERCAFE

¹ “Reducing the conflict between Cormorant and fisheries on a pan-European scale”. European Union Framework 5 Concerted Action, Q5CA-2000-31387. Final Report available at:

<http://banchory.ceh.ac.uk/redcafe/redcafedocs.htm>

10. Project introduction – background, REDCAFE, IMEW, COST –presentation (to be made available on forthcoming INTERCAFE project web site) providing: (1) background to cormorant-fisheries conflicts, (2) the development of an Action Plan for the Management of the Great Cormorant in the African-Eurasian Region, (3) missing elements, (4) the REDCAFE project, (5) the IMEW² project, (6) INTERCAFE framework and Working Groups, (7) inferences.

The inferences of previous work were that humans are the key species in environmental conflicts and that ecological understanding alone was not enough to manage these conflicts. Thus natural and social scientists need to work together, and together with local people, to better understand the ‘holistic’ nature of environmental conflicts and to devise solutions to manage these conflicts in collaboration. An interdisciplinary approach is particularly appropriate to us working on cormorant-fisheries conflicts. As REDCAFE showed, these human:wildlife conflicts are often human:human ones. “Why people think what they think and do what they do” is at the heart of any interdisciplinary endeavour. INTERCAFE is an interdisciplinary project co-authored by David Carss (ecologist) and Mariella Marzano (social anthropologist). Participants thus need to communicate with each other – across disciplines and truly share data/ideas in ways that inform each other’s research. INTERCAFE participants also need to communicate this information with local people and policy makers and listen and learn from these groups too. Throughout INTERCAFE we will be working on making interdisciplinarity work. To this end it was hoped to engage Scott Jones (University of Wolverhampton, REDCAFE WP4 facilitator) to work with the group to develop the interdisciplinary integration essential for the project’s success.

ACTION TWO: David Carss and Mariella Marzano to explore external sources of funding for interdisciplinary facilitation throughout INTERCAFE.

11. REDCAFE Volume II – a draft version of the REDCAFE Volume II (National Profiles) was discussed. Given the successful evaluation of the original pan-European overview (Final Report), there was no longer an official requirement to produce a second volume. However, in recognition of the contributions of several hundred people across Europe to REDCAFE it was considered vital to produce and disseminate a second report. It contains country reports for all 25 countries involved in REDCAFE in five sections: (i) national overview, (ii) conflicts (based on REDCAFE WP1), (iii) potential management tools (based on REDCAFE WP3), (iv) list of stakeholders consulted, (v) bibliography.

Work on Volume II is nearly complete and finished draft chapters will be circulated to REDCAFE participants shortly. They will be asked to update sections (i), (iv) and (v) and to return for final collation and printing.

ACTION THREE: David Carss and Mariella Marzano to complete drafting Volume II chapters and distribute to REDCAFE participants for comment, updating.

ACTION FOUR: REDCAFE participants to respond quickly with updated national profiles and return promptly.

² “Integrated Management of European Wetlands” European Union Framework 5 Research Project, EVK2-CT2000-22001. Details available at:

<http://dur.ac.uk/imew.ecproject>

12. Main REDCAFE messages – Volume II will also include a short chapter discussing the ‘main messages’ of the REDCAFE process/Final Report. In order to make these messages as complete and inclusive as possible, participants split into groups and considered them before reporting back in plenary to all attendees. Responses, including comments and questions raised in group discussions, were collated and will form the basis of this final chapter.

ACTION FIVE: David Carss and Mariella Marzano to collate main messages (including those highlighted after REDCAFE WP4 meeting in London) and draft final Volume II chapter and send to REDCAFE participants for comment/suggestions.

13. REDCAFE publicity leaflet – the main messages of REDCAFE will be distilled into a publicity leaflet for widespread dissemination. Participants discussed the need for this brochure to be produced in several languages. Stefano Volponi – suggested the following and there was widespread agreement for this approach:

1. The complete final leaflet text to be written and published in English,
2. Make an "editable version" of it (e.g. the word file) available to each country member for translation. So, for example the Italian version can change each written paragraph from English to Italian BUT without touching any other component of the document (picture, graph, etc). Thus each paragraph would use (and be adapted to) the same fixed amount of space in the document and there would be no need for further work on the printing format (otherwise this has to be done with every language/country version spending lot of time/work...),
3. Each country version would be saved in an universally printable/readable format such as Acrobat .pdf not allowing any modification or change by users (this is simply a format option),
4. Distribute and put on internet the different .pdf file versions so everyone interested can have his "official" copy in the preferred language; these documents/files can then be further distributed to stakeholders and other interested people both as they are or printed.

ACTION SIX: after finalisation of Volume II, participants to agree on text and most appropriate language/dissemination for publicity leaflet.

DAY TWO (21st September 2004) am: Group work

14. Introduction to INTERCAFE Working Groups – was provided by David Carss. Based on the COST proposal, work will concentrate on the Great Cormorant but other species (e.g. Pygmy Cormorant) will be considered where necessary. Overviews of the Working groups are as follows:

WG1: Ecological databases and analyses. To examine the ecology of cormorants at the continental scale – building on REDCAFE WP2. Important aspects include temporal and spatial distributions, choice of roosting, breeding and feeding sites. Ambition is to merge cormorant databases with others e.g. geography, climate, size/type of waterbody, nutrient

status, and fish community distribution. GIS may be used to improve understanding and predictive powers (e.g. making the environment less attractive to cormorants). WG1 should also consider lethal cormorant control at the regional level not as a conservation issue but in order to quantify additional mortality factors. This is important in the context of cormorant migration as action in one region (i.e. winter) could affect the status/distribution of breeding birds (summer). WG1 would provide data essential for population modelling and could consider co-ordination/collation of European colour-ringing schemes. WG1 participants should also consider 'legal frameworks' in order to discover how legislation is interpreted locally and regionally (e.g. interpretation of 'serious damage'): what are the inconsistencies, why do they occur, can/should they be reduced.

WG2: Conflict resolution and management – building on REDCAFE WP3. Cormorant conflicts are site-specific, conflict management actions should be assessed on a site-by-site basis (information being collated to give a pan-European picture). WG2 participants should collate biological, social and economic assessments of actions and mitigation measures, and economic aspects at specific sites. Interdisciplinarity would be at the heart of WG2 work in producing site-specific assessments of management actions. WG2 would link cases to legal frameworks and economies at wider regional/national scales. Interdisciplinarity will give WG2 a better understanding of the 'success' or 'failure' of actions – perhaps leading to better practical applications. The WG should work closely wherever possible with local stakeholders and policy makers. It should also consider standardisation/harmonisation – communicate ideas/experiences across Europe – develop an information exchange mechanism.

WG3: Linking science with policy and best practice – building on experiences of REDCAFE WP4. It is clear that we are dealing with a spectrum of conflicts from human:wildlife to human:human and that only if we can understand the true nature of the conflict can we produce the most appropriate solutions. WG3 emphasises the promotion of links between natural/social science, local stakeholders, economists, policy advisors in order to better understand the socio-cultural issues associated with conflicts. Three or four major case study workshops across Europe are envisaged. These will be chosen after careful consideration of geographic location, habitat types, stakeholder groups, fishery types, current/potential mitigation actions etc. Local stakeholders will provide site-specific inputs and other participants will provide national and international context and all will consider ecological, social, economic, and policy perspectives.

15. Group work – began with participants assigning themselves into Working Groups and agreeing that, given the close interdisciplinary ties between WGs 2 and 3, these two groups should work together. WG1 and WGs2/3 were asked to focus on Year One and discuss what needs to be done and how the work will be organised. They were also asked to consider the timeframe for meetings during INTERCAFE and the most appropriate times of year, potential case studies for WG3, and potential external sources of research funding.

DAY TWO (21st September 2004) pm: Plenary

Each WG provided an overview of their earlier discussions thus allowing input from all participants.

16. WG1 report from Stef van Rijn/Stefano Volponi. Discussions in this group were wide-ranging and involved many countries, although focussing in the first instance on cormorant ecology, the groups was aware of the wider ecological remit of WG1.

A. Cormorant ecology - effort for missing information in:

1. Breeding numbers (especially Sweden, England, Ireland, Poland). Action for Thomas Bregnballe and Stefano Volponi.
2. Winter roost counts (2003). Especially United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Portugal. Action for Stef van Rijn, Loïc Marion, Rosemarie Parz-Gollner.
3. Information about shooting in each country.

Cormorant ecology - information on shooting:

1. Spain (Jean-Yves)
2. Lithuania (Mindaugas Dagys)
3. Poland (Szymon Bzoma) 3,000/year (info Robert Gwiazda)
4. Former Yugoslavian countries (Marijan Govedic marijan.govedic@ckff.si)
5. others to find out

B. Other points

1. Data should include breeding success where possible,
2. Increase effort to relate cormorant ecological data to that on fish communities.
3. More general geographic/environmental datasets – available at RIZA?

ACTION SEVEN: Group to investigate status/availability of two potential sources of fish community data (1) EIFAC fish map for Europe due 2006, (2) Water Framework Directive fish distribution datasets due mid-2005.

C. Ideas:

- (i) Consider possibility of pan European colony count in 2006,
- (ii) Consider international midwinter census in January 2007 – can potential activities (i/ii) include the use of Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) within COST?
- (iii) Website availability – need to consider copyrights, permissions, agreements etc for publishing/circulating information on forthcoming INTERCAFE web site.
- (iv) Consider possibilities of COST funding standardised protocols for (a) working in cormorant colonies, (b) measuring breeding success. There is pressing need for standardisation/harmonisation of cormorant field techniques: production of field manual has been considered by CGR for several years, INTERCAFE could act as a focus for realising this ambition.

ACTION EIGHT: Stef van Rijn and Stefano Volponi to liase with David Carss on the above tasks – priorities and timescales, realistic achievements for first official meeting.

17. WGs2 and 3 report from Thomas Keller. Discussions started with all participants having the opportunity to contribute their thoughts on WGs 2 and 3. Discussion included the nature of conflicts (site-specific in terms of local issues/stakeholders versus

continental in terms of legislation and economies [particularly important if the EU is asked to devise a compensation scheme for damage]), that ultimate ‘solutions’ must consider the wider picture in that many cormorant conflicts are symptomatic of ‘damaged’ aquatic systems, the desire to produce a management tools manual encompassing experiences from across Europe, that the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of mitigation measures is dependent on who judges (e.g. local stakeholders, Government Departments), the possibility of following conflicts through time – to investigate their dynamics, synthesising mitigation actions in relation to habitat/fishery types may be more useful than categorising them on a regional/national basis for instance, the need to balance INTERCAFE work across local, regional and national/international scales and to work towards integrating the work of WGs 2 and 3 with that of WG1.

WG2 kick-off plan: to work with the original REDCAFE datasets for (a) conflicts – WP1 and (b) mitigation actions – WP3 and gain new insights (especially WP3) – updated information from stakeholders and new INTERCAFE participants. Also analyse data for (WP3) actions taken at breeding and roosting sites that was not included in REDCAFE Final Report. The size of these REDCAFE datasets precludes any in-depth interdisciplinary investigation, it may thus be most efficient for participants to consider a broad interpretation and circulate to relevant stakeholders for their input. A stronger interdisciplinary perspective would be achieved by revisiting the REDCAFE cases that were discussed/highlighted (e.g. Hula Valley, Switzerland, Saxony, Po Delta) – update, include more perhaps, and provide interdisciplinary perspective by discussing with relevant local people.

WG3 kick-off plan: major case studies would require considerable pre-planning therefore the first should happen towards the end of Year One. Several ideas for selection were discussed (see item 19) and it was agreed that each would require comprehensive local organisation, input from local stakeholders, and any problems of language translation would have to be addressed.

ACTION NINE: Thomas Keller, Kareen Seiche, Sandra Bell and Mariella Marzano to liaise with David Carss on the above tasks – priorities and timescales, realistic achievements for first official meeting.

18. The timeframe/timing for INTERCAFE - it was agreed by all that INTERCAFE should meet three times a year (subject to revision if thought necessary). Meetings would be planned for the end of January, end of April, and end of September each year of the project. A majority of participants would be happy for the first meeting to be held in Israel, although a number of options (including a return to Brussels) were available and Israel was also a candidate WG3 case study given the high prominence of the Hula Valley situation.

ACTION TEN: David Carss and Mariella Marzano to discuss with relevant participants and COST office (there is a requirement that meeting be held in countries that have signed the MoU), arrange Year One programme (venues, dates) and circulate to all as quickly as possible.

Important Note: Immediately after the meeting and in the days following, forthcoming meetings were discussed and the following plan is now proposed for the first four INTERCAFE meetings.

(1) Portugal: end of January 2005. Susana França and Catarina Vinagre will organise, including accommodation, meeting rooms and possible field excursion.

(2) Poland: late April 2005. Szymon Bzoma and Robert Gwiazda will organise, (either Gdansk or Cracow), including accommodation, meeting rooms and possible field excursion.

(3) Saxony: September 2005. Kareen Seiche and Thomas Keller will organise, including instructive field trip to the Carp pond region and also to the new huge freshwater lakes that recently came into existence after the last active brown coal pits had been closed.

(4) Israel: February 2006. Zeef Arad and colleagues will organise. This will be the first INTERCAFE Case Study, focussing on the Hula Valley. Case study will explore how all stakeholders collaborated and communicated their expertise/information to each other, organised a collective plan of action and timed their actions for maximum mutual benefit.

19. Potential INTERCAFE case studies for WG3 – a number of criteria for potential case studies were discussed:

(i) Freshwater lakes – common to several countries e.g. Sweden (history, fish data, shooting) or France (big colony at Grand-Lieu, professional fisheries stakeholders, fishery data, impact assessments – but too eutrophic to be typical?).

(ii) Focus on recreational angling – no specific countries.

(iii) Consider ‘natural’ versus ‘stocked’ fisheries.

(iv) Carp production – e.g. France, Czech Republic (Trebou), Poland, Saxony, could also consider ‘biodiversity value’ of carp ponds.

(v) France – Le Doubs, northeast Lyons – good situation to examine short-scale cormorant movements between natural grayling rivers and ponds. May take some time to collate all the relevant local information.

(vi) Compare fishery types – e.g. commercial versus recreational (Denmark – stocked freshwaters/natural coasts).

(vii) Compare breeding/wintering areas – e.g. Italy, Venice Lagoons.

(viii) Consider a case without cormorant conflicts – e.g. Norway, Finland.

ACTION ELEVEN: Group to consider options and decide on case studies as early in project as possible.

20. Potential external sources of research funding - a number of potential sources were discussed:

(i) EU PCRD – north versus south (local) studies but deadline missed?

(ii) European Aquaculture Association/IUCN – potential source of funding for book detailing cormorant breeding and wintering distributions.

(iii) National basis – PhD studentships for data analysis.

(iv) Regional/national authorities may sponsor case study workshops.

(v) INTEREG III – European structural funding with end-user focus and emphasis on education/training – relevant for carp aquaculture?

(vi) Others: Global Environmental Foundation (World Bank), Darwin Initiative, LIFE Environment.

ACTION TWELVE: Group to consider options and possibility of evolving an INTERCAFE sub-group to assess potential sources of funding and instigate collaborative applications.

21. Any other business

ACTION THIRTEEN: David Carss to liaise with participants and others to consider quick agreement/development of (1) realistic goals/timetables for WGs, (2) production of outputs from kick-off meeting (including a full participant list), (3) centralised email address for the group, (4) project website – establishment, organisation, management.

22. Close – the meeting was closed by David Carss who thanked participants for their contributions, reminded them of the importance of submitting reimbursement forms quickly, and expressed the hope that INTERCAFE would build on REDCAFE to become a useful interdisciplinary tool with which to address cormorant issues across Europe and beyond.