

INTERCAFE@Gdansk

Meeting summary

The meeting in Gdansk, Poland was the second scientific meeting of INTERCAFE. The meeting was designed so that there was time for (a) Work Groups to continue with their activities (*see below), (b) group exercises to promote interdisciplinary interaction between natural and social science within INTERCAFE (to engender a more holistic understanding of Cormorant conflicts across Europe), and (c) sub-groups to continue with their plans.

However, the three-day meeting (23rd -25th April 2005) also concentrated on issues surrounding commercial fisheries and cormorant ecology. Gdansk is an ideal setting for this meeting as there have been several studies (by INTERCAFE researchers and others) of cormorant impact on commercial fish stocks (and water quality) in the Gulf of Gdansk (Baltic Sea) and Vistula Lagoon. Furthermore, these and other studies (e.g. cormorant breeding biology, diet, foraging regimes) have mainly been conducted at the nearby Katy Rybackie colony (probably the largest in Europe). The field trip included a short boat trip through the Vistula Lagoon, offering participants the chance to see at first hand many important features of the area including, habitat types, water quality, commercial fisheries in operation, the geographical location of the Cormorant colony and the sight of many thousands of cormorants in foraging flocks crossing between their feeding grounds and the colony. Participants were also guided through the colony by a small team of local scientists who have studied there for several years. This was an opportunity for many to see for the first time 'life in a cormorant colony' at first-hand. Several issues arose and were discussed during and after the colony tour, including census (nest counting) techniques, population dynamics, diet assessment (and, ultimately, fish stock 'impact' assessment).

*Brief summary of topics addressed by Work Groups:

WG1 Ecological Databases and Analyses

- Water systems database
- Status of breeding colonies 2006
- The preliminary results of the first pan-European winter roost count
- Historical Database of Breeding Colonies
- Cormorant manual-field techniques
- Ecology of Pygmy Cormorants
- Baltic Sea leaflet

WG2 Conflict management and resolution

- Legal frameworks
- Definitions- clarification should be sought on the terms: 'favourable conservation status', 'sustainable fishery', 'serious damage' and 'successful conflict resolution'.
- Case studies-carp ponds
- New information on management techniques (e.g. fish refuges, high pressure water hoses)

WG3 Linking science with policy and best practice

This Work Group focussed on “A Better Understanding of People’s Leisure/Livelihoods and Attitudes”. Work Group sessions were dedicated to investigating four WG3 case studies (Danish coastal fisheries, Czech Republic carp ponds, Bulgarian reservoirs, Austrian rivers). The aim of the sessions was to get a better understanding, not just of the ecology but also of the relationships, values, politics, economics and other social and cultural aspects of specific conflicts.