Expert Meeting on Migratory Birds and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Far Eastern Region 23rd June 2011, Tokyo, Japan

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of the Environment Japan in collaboration with OIE

Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific, with support from BirdLife International, East Asian
Australasian Flyway Partnership and Wetlands International.

SUMMARY RECORD

Invited experts from Japan, Mongolia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation presented their studies about migratory and other wild birds and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus subtype H5N1.

The role of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership in promoting conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the flyway as well as responding to the threat to wild birds from HPAI through the work of its *Asia-Pacific Working Group on Migratory Waterbirds and Avian Influenza* was recognized.

The major outcomes of the discussions include the following:

- 1. Our current understanding of the role of wild birds in the epizootology of HPAI outbreaks is incomplete. Given the wide variety of wild bird species, both migratory and resident, habitats and their ecological differences across Asia, it is expected that the specific role of wild birds in the transmission and maintenance of the virus in different regions can vary widely.
- 2. It is important to strengthen the field monitoring of migratory and other wild birds as well as monitoring of avian influenza viruses in wild birds in each country.
- 3. The following research themes need to be investigated on a priority basis to improve our understanding of the possible role of birds in the spread of HPAI virus and changes taking place in the migration patterns and distribution ranges of birds due to climate change and other factors as well as to support conservation activities:
 - identification of movement patterns of wild birds within and across countries through large-scale ringing/banding, color marking, and improved tracking techniques such as satellite tracking devices and geolocators in all countries. There is a need to develop/communicate colour marking protocols to support such research activities for migratory species;
 - local and daily movement patterns of wild birds in relation to the spectrum of poultry production practices in differing habitats;

- spatial and temporal use of important congregatory sites by wild birds during their annual cycles;
- environmental stresses and physiological conditions factors and anthropogenic effects on HPAI outbreaks in wild birds;
- ecology of avian influenza viruses and their epizootology, particularly at the interface between wild and domestic birds;
- possible role of higher risk wild bird species in the epizootology of HPAI; and
- maximizing outcomes from research on wild birds for conservation and disease investigations, for e.g. through ensuring preservation of samples in specimen banks for future studies, improved archiving and sharing of telemetry data, publication of scientific research and field studies.
- 4. It is crucial to share information amongst different experts, organizations and countries to support research and conservation activities on a timely and ongoing basis on the following priority issues:
 - migratory patterns (including strategies and routes) and biology of higher risk bird species for avian influenza;
 - disease surveillance activities in wild birds and outcomes of activities;
 - HPAI outbreaks in wild birds and poultry;
 - guidelines on preventive and control measures pre/post outbreaks developed by different international and national agencies; and
 - spatial and temporal information on locations and usage of important congregatory sites by wild birds.
- 5. Strengthening of communication networks to support the timely sharing of information amongst nature management, veterinary and research agencies and NGOs across the region such as the *Asia-Pacific Working Group on Migratory Waterbirds and Avian Influenza* and OIE is needed.
- 6. Mechanisms to strengthen improved management of Ramsar sites and wetlands of national and international importance, to protect wild birds and to minimize the spread of zoonotic diseases are needed.
- 7. Greater recognition of the importance of promoting ecosystem health, animal health and public health is needed to deal with zoonotic diseases.
- 8. Promoting dissemination of bird migration and conservation information in local languages is a priority.