

Conclusions and recommendations

EIS meeting / Brussels Colloquium September, 1991

by Martin C.D. SPEIGHT

At the Brussels Colloquium and European Invertebrate Survey meeting of September, 1991, it was decided to transmit to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention certain conclusions and recommendations relating to certain aspects of protection of invertebrates under the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats). A first draft of these conclusions and recommendations was drawn up at the end of the EIS meeting and a final version was produced following receipt of additional comments from those who participated in the discussion. The organizing committee of the Brussels Colloquium has decided to reproduce the text of these conclusions and recommendations as part of the Proceedings of the Colloquium. The text is as follows:

At its 1991 meeting in Brussels the EIS discussed the lists of invertebrate species included in Annexes II en III of the Bern Convention and in particular the basis upon which species might be selected for inclusion in these Annexes. It was agreed that the outcome of this discussion be sent to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, with the request that our conclusions be brought to the attention of the Specialist Group in Conservation of Invertebrates at its 1992 meeting.

The EIS notes that inclusion of threatened invertebrates in the appendices of the Bern Convention has already had a very positive influence, in stimulating an increased interest in invertebrates and their conservation. The concept of a list of "flagship" species, allowing inclusion in the appendices of selected invertebrate species that are not threatened at European level but are well-known and recognisable, has also clearly been of benefit in this respect. However, we recognise that the uses to which the Bern species lists would be put were not easy to predict and that some difficulty is now arising due to use of all the listed species in the same way in work on site evaluation. We would point out that a different meaning attaches to the presence on a site of threatened and non-threatened species, so that these two groups require to be clearly distinguished from one another in the Annex lists. We recommend either of the following courses of action:

- i) invertebrate species that are threatened at the European level should be asterisked in the Bern Convention Annex lists,
- or
- ii) the Annex lists of invertebrates should each be divided into two sections, A and B, section A listing the species threatened at European level and section B listing the "flagship" species which are not threatened at European level.

A third alternative would be to remove the non-threatened "flagship" invertebrate species from the appendices. But we would regard this as the least desirable option since the role of these species within the framework of the Convention is as yet far from played out. We note also that many vertebrates which are not threatened at European level are included in the Bern Convention Annex lists, so that in their present content the invertebrate lists conform to the approach adhered to elsewhere in the Convention. However, we would observe that at the moment there would not seem to be a need to increase the number of "flagship" invertebrates listed in the Bern Convention Annexes, whereas the serious plight of many threatened species leads us to recommend strongly that

the number of threatened invertebrate species listed in the Bern Convention Annexes should be increased. Given that invertebrates are now being incorporated into site evaluation processes we consider that this role of invertebrates should be taken into consideration when any additions to the Bern invertebrate lists are contemplated.

In considering the concept of species threatened at the European level, we conclude that there is no simple, universally applicable set of criteria which could be used to decide the degree of threat to which any invertebrate is subject, but that any criteria used will have to be tailored to each major taxonomic group under consideration. We also feel that in each instance the criteria used should be clearly expressed.

Assuming that lists of species threatened at the European level can be derived for major groups of invertebrates in addition to those already surveyed, it is our conclusion that, in considering these threatened species as potential candidates for inclusion on the Bern Convention Annex lists, there is justification for giving high priority to species which would fall into the following categories:

- a) threatened species known to have undergone serious decline in Europe during the present century,
- b) species endemic to Europe which are also known to be threatened (we would stress that endemic species should not automatically be listed because they are endemic - endemic species are not necessarily threatened species).

In considering invertebrates endemic to Europe we recommend the following:

- a) any state within whose territory the entire world population of any invertebrate species is known to be confined should be reminded of their particular obligation to ensure that this endemic species is adequately protected,
- b) listings of European endemic invertebrates confined to individual states should be prepared as a matter of priority.

We also note that considerable biogeographic and evolutionary interest attaches to particular genetically distinct, isolated, relict populations of invertebrates whose other European populations are not recognised as threatened. There may well be difficulties in addressing the problem of protection of such threatened infra-specific taxa through the medium of the Bern Convention, but we feel there is an urgent need to draw attention to them and recommend that, at the very least, some international initiative to this end be set in motion.

Further, we would wish to note that, in the series of studies the Council of Europe has commissioned on invertebrates, it has performed an invaluable service to the cause of invertebrate protection in Europe. However, we do not feel that the results of these studies are adequately reflected in the existing Bern Convention Annex species lists and urge re-examination of the lists of species recognised as threatened at European level in those studies (i.e. the studies on threatened European butterflies, dragonflies, saproxylics, aculeate Hymenoptera and non-marine Mollusca), with a view to augmentation of the lists of invertebrate species included in the Bern Convention Annexes. We would also urge the initiation of further such studies in the context of the Bern convention's work on invertebrates, with the explicit intention of providing a reliable basis for further increasing the number of threatened invertebrates included in the Bern Convention Annexes, in particular in relation to broadening their role in site evaluation work. We recommend that both particular taxonomic groups and particular biocoenoses be considered for study, and consider that there are sufficient data, interest

and expertise, internationally, for European studies of the following topics to be carried out without delay:

- a) threatened European cavernicolous invertebrates,
- b) threatened European Trichoptera (Insecta),
- c) threatened European Neuroptera (Insecta).

Finally, we would note that little attention seems yet to have been paid to the situation of Europe's fauna of marine invertebrates. We conclude that urgent measures require to be taken to provide an overview of the situation in the intertidal/subtidal zones, and recommend that a sub-committee be constituted to report back to the specialists group with recommendations for action. We are establishing a sub-group within EIS to cooperate in any such initiative.

We hope that the content of this letter will provide a useful contribution to discussion at the next meeting of the Bern Specialists Group in Invertebrate Conservation and reaffirm the continued interest of EIS in helping in whatever ways it can, in respect of efforts to protect Europe's invertebrate fauna through the provisions of the Bern Convention. The recommendations contained in this text may be given in summary form as follows:

EUROPEAN INVERTEBRATE SURVEY MEETING, BRUSSELS, 1991:
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PROTECTION OF
INVERTEBRATE SPECIES UNDER THE BERN CONVENTION

1. Species threatened at the European level should be clearly distinguished from the non-threatened "flagship" species listed in the existing appendices, either by means of asterisks, or by separating the two groups into different sub-appendices.
2. The "flagship" species, which are not threatened at European level, should be removed from listing in the Bern Convention Annexes when it is felt that their role in popularising the principle of the need to protect European invertebrates has been adequately played-out.
3. If further species are to be added to the appendix lists, the additional species should all be species threatened at the European level.
4. The number of species in the appendices should be increased, as the number of species reliably identified as under threat at European level increases.
5. In deciding whether species are under threat at the European level, the criteria employed should be tailored to the particular taxonomic groups under consideration and should permit application of the IUCN threat categories.
6. The criteria used in identifying species as under threat at European level should be clearly expressed.
7. In selecting species for inclusion in the appendices, from among species listed as threatened at European level, the following categories of species should be given high priority for inclusion:

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- a) threatened species known to have undergone serious decline in Europe during the present century,
 - b) threatened species which are endemic to Europe,
 - c) threatened species which would be particularly indicative of elements of site quality not so easily detected using plants or vertebrates.
8. Listings of invertebrate species endemic to individual European states should be prepared as a matter of priority.
 9. Any European state which has ratified the Bern Convention, and to which the entire world population of an invertebrate species is confined, should be reminded of its particular obligation under the Bern Convention, to ensure that this endemic species is protected.
 10. There is an urgent need to address the question of how the protection of infra-specific taxa of biogeographic and evolutionary significance might be better achieved under the Bern Convention.
 11. The results of completed European Studies on threatened butterflies, dragonflies, saproxylics, aculeate Hymenoptera and non-marine Mollusca should be reappraised, with a view to deriving a more comprehensive list of threatened invertebrates appropriate for inclusion in the Bern Convention Annexes.
 12. Further European Studies of threatened invertebrates should be conducted by the Council of Europe/Bern Convention Committee, with the explicit intent of identifying species requiring to be added to the appendices of the Bern Convention.
 13. The following groups should be considered as particularly worthy of study at the European level:
 - a) threatened European cavernicolous invertebrates,
 - b) threatened European Trichoptera (Insecta),
 - c) threatened European Neuroptera (Insecta).
 14. Urgent consideration should be given to the setting up of a sub-group, to report on the situation of Europe's marine invertebrates.

Martin C.D. SPEIGHT
Research Branch
Nat. Pks & Wildlife Service
51 St. Stephens Green
DUBLIN 2 - IRELAND