

Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group meeting by video conference on October 2021

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Three adult Eurasian spoonbills breeding in Camargue, Southern France. Note that the individual on the left wears a metal ring on his leg and the individual in the middle wears a GPS logger with solar panel on his back.

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The Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group (ESIEG) met on Friday 1st of October 2021 as part of the workshops that have been held every three years since 1992. This group is coordinating the [International Action Plan](#) for the protection of this emblematic wetland species. The Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) has suffered from decline of wetlands, especially during the 20th century. Thanks to protection measures combined with research across Europe, their numbers are increasing along the Atlantic coast and in the Mediterranean, but are decreasing in Southeast Europe and threats are still present.

After the [workshop that took place in Tunisia](#) in 2018 (see group photo) the group had planned to meet in person this year in Croatia. However, COVID-related health restrictions in place in various countries prevented experts from numerous countries from participating. It was decided to postpone the in-person workshop in Croatia to 2022. Jocelyn Champagnon (chair of ESIEG and researcher at the Tour du Valat) along with Jelena

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Kralj (coordinator of ESIEG from the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) organised this virtual meeting to ensure timely exchange of information and share research findings.

35 participants from 16 different countries gathered and presented the status of Spoonbill populations in their respective countries. Among the threats identified to this species were: power lines used in the development of offshore wind turbines (The Netherlands), terrestrial predators of nests (In Southern France), climate change, reduction of wetlands along migratory flyway, and human disturbances. Some solutions were also presented such as the use of electric fences to protect colonies from predators such as wild boars. Research studies are underway on Eurasian spoonbill, and researchers presented findings especially on their migration and the use of habitats during reproduction. They are being led, among others, by two Portuguese graduate students who presented their projects and their preliminary results.

Participants were enthusiastic about sharing their findings and learning from presenters, and there were lively discussions. There is also an urgent sense to meet in person, and participants developed preliminary plans for the 2022 in-person meeting in Croatia.