



4th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
15 – 19 September 2008, Antananarivo, Madagascar

“Flyway Conservation at Work – Review of the Past, Vision for the Future”

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AEWA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE TO
THE 4TH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

Introduction

This report is being submitted to the fourth session of the Meeting of Parties (MOP4) by the Technical Committee (TC), in accordance with Article VII paragraph 3(c) of the Agreement. The report describes the activities undertaken by the TC to implement its work plan for 2006-2008 as well as the results achieved.

During the triennium 2006-2008, the third triennium since the Agreement came into force, the Technical Committee held two meetings at different locations; both meetings were chaired by Yousoof Mungroo. The seventh meeting (TC7) was held from 29 October to 1 November 2006 in Berne, Switzerland at the kind invitation of the Government of Switzerland and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The eighth meeting (TC8) took place from 3 to 5 March 2008 in Bonn, Germany at the UN premises. We would like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to the hosts for their generous invitations, the excellent logistics and the conditions provided contributed significantly to the success of these meetings. I wish to inform this august assembly that Ghana did show an interest in hosting the 8th Technical Committee meeting but postponed their invitation to a future meeting. The meeting was subsequently scheduled to take place in Naivasha, Kenya. All the logistics for the meeting were finalised, however due to political unrest in Kenya, it had to be re-scheduled to another venue at short notice. The Secretariat successfully took up the challenge and the 8th Technical Committee meeting was held at the United Nations Campus in Bonn, Germany.

The 8th TC meeting was of particular significance as it was the last Technical Committee Meeting before the 4th Session of the Meeting to the Parties. Furthermore the Secretariat introduced an innovative aspect to the Agenda by including evening workshops which proved to be very productive in dealing with the international reviews and drafting of resolutions. During the three-day meeting the TC went through some 27 items on the Agenda and 7 of 9 international reviews, prepared in accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the Action Plan or Meeting of Parties resolutions have been discussed and endorsed for submission to MOP4 through the Standing Committee.

Work Plan 2006-2008

The operations of the Technical Committee during the triennium 2006-2008 were guided by a work plan, which outlined the major tasks to be fulfilled as instructed by MOP3 and previous MOPs or by the Agreement's Action Plan. The TC Work Plan 2006-2008 was collated by the Secretariat after the 3rd session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP3) on 23 to 27 October 2005.

The work of the TC started just after MOP3 and has been an ongoing process throughout the triennium. The TC approved the Work Plan in February 2006 through a written procedure (via email). The plan initially consisted of 11 tasks and each task has been taken forward by a TC working group consisting of several regional representatives, organisation representatives, appointed experts, observers, as well as Secretariat staff and chaired by one of the group members.

During TC7 it was agreed that two issues/tasks, i.e. the development of an online reporting format and a strategic plan would be dealt with by one enlarged group (Working Group 5) due to the obvious links between these two issues. The Secretariat and the TC members worked intersessionally between the meetings of the Committee by email and on the basis of ad-hoc workshops convened by the Secretariat in Bonn. All the 11 tasks have been completed with the exception of the issue of drafting guidance on the application of AEWA Table 1 criteria for categories A3d and B2d - extent of extreme fluctuation in population size or trend. This issue was discussed in Berne and further in an ad-hoc workshop in Bonn. It was decided that more expert help was needed by a statistician; however this work could not be contracted out due to lack of funds and was therefore postponed to the next triennium.

Some of the tasks have not been fulfilled solely by the TC but required input (reports, assessments, etc.) by external consultants. These tasks have been fulfilled where resources permitted.

The table below summarises activities undertaken against each task over the past triennium and the results delivered.

AEWA Technical Committee Work Plan 2006-2008

| Issue/task | Working group composition | Action taken and results delivered |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Prioritise, which waterbird taxa would benefit from an early review of the limits of their populations (Resolution 3.2, resource permitting)</p> | <p>WH, DS, JOS, PC, SD</p> | <p>MOP3 requested Wetlands International in collaboration with the TC to prioritise which waterbird taxa would benefit from an early review of the limits of their populations. The initial work was done in 2006 in the form of a broad-level priority list for reviewing species on the basis of a set of suggested criteria. After a discussion at TC7, with the help of the Secretariat, the suggested criteria were refined and narrowed down to five and they were applied. This issue was again addressed at an ad-hoc workshop in Bonn in March 2007 and the work was finalised at TC8. A cost estimate for undertaking population delineation for the identified priority taxa was provided by Wetlands International. The outputs from the work of this group served as a basis for Draft Resolution 4.2.</p> |
| <p>2. Guidance on the degree of concentration on a small number of specific sites at any stage of annual cycle (Resolution 3.3)</p> | <p>WH, AH, DS, PC, RP, JOS, SD</p> | <p>This is the criterion used for categories A3a and B2a of the AEWA Table 1 and the TC was requested by MOP3 to develop interpretation guidance. A paper was presented by the working group to TC7, where two approaches were suggested – one closer to the Ramsar’s 1% criterion and the other one closer to the BirdLife’s definition of “Localised” species. The working group met in Bonn at an ad-hoc workshop in March 2007 and finalized a proposed definition which was adopted by TC8. It is based on a definition used by Birdlife for “Localised” species whereby it was noted that there is a large degree of overlap between AEWA species currently categorized as A3a and B2a and those categorised by BirdLife as “Localised”. This definition is proposed for adoption in Draft Resolution 4.12 and an additional guidance text compiled by Dr. Preben Clausen on behalf of the TC is available in document AEWA/MOP 4.25.</p> |
| <p>3. Guidance on the dependence on a habitat type which is under severe threat</p> | <p>DS, ON, JOS, JK, SD</p> | <p>This is the criterion used for categories A3b and B2b of the AEWA Table 1 and the TC was requested by MOP3 to develop interpretation guidance. The approach suggested in a paper presented to TC7 in 2006 was highly dependent on habitat (wetland) classification, availability of habitat (wetland) inventories and expert opinion in deriving a list of “severely threatened” habitat types. At TC7 a small drafting group was called to</p> |

| Issue/task | Working group composition | Action taken and results delivered |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| (Resolution 3.3) | | rethink the proposal and suggest a more pragmatic approach. A new proposal was presented to the meeting which concerned a definition of the term “severe threat”. In mid-March 2007, the working group met at the AEWA Secretariat premises for a one-day ad hoc workshop and agreed on a definition for the criterion as well as on guidance for its application which was approved by TC8. This definition is proposed for adoption in Draft Resolution 4.12; an additional guidance text compiled by Dr. Preben Clausen on behalf of the TC is available in document AEWA/MOP 4.25. |
| 4. Guidance on the extent of extreme fluctuations in population size or trend (Resolution 3.3) | DS, WH, JOS, PC, RP, SD | This is the criterion used for categories A3d and B2d of the AEWA Table 1 and the TC was requested by MOP3 to develop interpretation guidance. The issue was discussed at TC7 and it was agreed to follow the IUCN Red List criterion for extreme fluctuations. This was further discussed at the ad-hoc workshop in Bonn in March 2007 and it was decided that more expert help was needed by a statistician. Efforts had been made to contact appropriate statisticians however funds were lacking to cover this work. Finalisation of the work was postponed to the next triennium, funds permitting. |
| 5. (a) Develop an online national report format and also seek to harmonise reporting with other MEAs (Resolution 3.5, resources permitting) (b) Provide input into the development of a Strategic Plan for AEWA (Resolution 3.9) | OB, DS, RA, FK, SD, BL, SD | MOP3 decided on the development of a new Online National Report Format as well as a Strategic Plan for the Agreement based on the CMS Strategic Plan. The Strategic Planning process was commissioned to Ms Gwen Van Boven of SPAN Consultants, the same consultant who developed the AEWA Communication Strategy. Members of the Technical Committee were interviewed by the consultant at the very beginning of the strategic planning process and the Committee reviewed drafts of the plan as they became available. The first draft of a new National Report Format was developed by the Secretariat and extensively consulted with the Technical Committee. In January 2007 at a small ad-hoc workshop in Bonn the draft Strategic Plan and the draft National report Format were, to a great extent, aligned. After another consultation with TC the new report format was finalised and submitted to the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in April 2007. In the framework of a UNEP-funded project for knowledge management within biodiversity MEAs, WCMC developed online reporting systems for CMS and AEWA as one of the components of this project. The draft Strategic Plan and the draft National Report Format were finally signed off by the Standing Committee and are now available respectively as document AEWA/MOP 4.19 and document AEWA/MOP 4.20. They are proposed for adoption in Draft Resolution 4.7. |

| Issue/task | Working group composition | Action taken and results delivered |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <p>6. Consider the potential role of the Agreement in the conservation of seabirds (in the light of work done by RFMOs, and other ISOs, such as CBD and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea) (Resolution 3.8)</p> | <p>OB, YM, AS, RA, BL, SD</p> | <p>A paper was submitted by the working group to TC7 and the issue was discussed at the meeting. The paper was then extended and improved and commented again at the ad-hoc workshop in March 2007. In July 2007 the TC paper on the potential role of the Agreement in the conservation of seabirds was approved through a written procedure by e-mail. A list of 20 seabird species for inclusion in AEWA was recommended for re-submission to MOP4. The proposal for the inclusion of 20 new species was sponsored by Mauritius and is available in document AEWA/MOP 4.24 and is suggested for approval in Draft Resolution 4.11. The TC paper was circulated by the Secretariat to all Contracting Parties. It is available in document AEWA/MOP Inf. 4.2.</p> <p>At TC8 the Committee discussed the need to amend the Agreement's Action Plan in order to provide for action for the conservation of AEWA species in the marine environment (the newly suggested species for inclusions and the ones that are already on the list). The TC drafted several new paragraphs to Section 4.3 of the Action Plan; these paragraphs were sponsored and proposed by Libya (available in document AEWA/MOP 4.24 and suggested for approval in Draft Resolution 4.11).</p> |
| <p>7. Review the structure of the IIP to enhance their responsiveness to emerging issues from the Action Plan paragraph 7.4 a-g reviews (Resolution 3.11) and after assessing the reviews also to formulate draft recommendation and resolutions for consideration by MOP (Action Plan 7.6)</p> | <p>YM, WH, JOS, DS, SD</p> | <p>Over the past triennium five of the seven international reviews required by paragraph 7.4 of the Action Plan were compiled. The TC was involved in the drafting and deciding on the Terms of Reference for each of the reviews. The TC was extensively consulted in the process of compilation of the reviews and commented on drafts as they became available. All the five reviews were signed off at TC8 in March 2008. They are available as documents AEWA/MOP 4.8; 4.9; 4.10; 4.11; and 4.12.</p> <p>On the basis of conclusions and recommendations of these reviews the TC considered the International Implementation Priorities. The structure remained largely unchanged in comparison to previous triennia; the number of new priorities to be added was kept to a minimum and only five new projects were suggested for inclusion. The reason for this is that the TC considers the highest priority for the following triennium to be the under-funded projects linked to the Wings Over Wetlands/UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project. The draft IIP for 2009-2012 are available in document AEWA/MOP 4.23 and are suggested for approval in Draft</p> |

| Issue/task | Working group composition | Action taken and results delivered |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| | | <p>Resolution 4.10.</p> <p>The findings of these reviews also served for formulation of recommendations for consideration by MOP4. The TC has forwarded these recommendations in Draft Resolutions 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; and 4.5.</p> |
| <p>8. Climate change:</p> <p>(a) review current evidence of the effect of climate change on waterbirds, implications of modelled patterns of climate change on waterbirds, and an outline of possible means of adapting to these changes;</p> <p>(b) identify species from Table 1 that are especially vulnerable and identify measures to maintain such populations;</p> <p>(c) identify relevant actions to be undertaken as part of the IIP;</p> <p>(d) propose changes to</p> | <p>DS, WH, PC, AS, SD</p> | <p>In order to implement this large task a report was commissioned to the British Trust for Ornithology. The TC was involved in the drafting and decision-making process regarding the Terms of Reference for this work. The TC was extensively consulted in the process of compilation of the report and commented on drafts as they became available. The report on the effects of climate change on waterbirds within the AEWA region was signed off at TC8 in March 2008. The sub-tasks (a), (b) and (e) were covered by this report. This report is available in document AEWA/MOP 4.27 and a brief popular version is also available.</p> <p>Sub-task (c) was covered by the TC at its 8th meeting in March 2008. One project was suggested for inclusion in IIP 2009-2012 (available in document AEWA/MOP 4.23).</p> <p>The TC felt that it would need some more time before suggesting changes to the Action Plan with regard to climate change. Therefore sub-task (d) will be taken up in the following triennium.</p> <p>Under the same project BTO also drafted Conservation Guidelines on adaptation measures to climate change effects which were consulted with the TC and signed off for submission to MOP4 through the Standing Committee. The guidelines are available in document AEWA/MOP 4.28 and are suggested for adoption by Draft Resolution 4.14.</p> |

| Issue/task | Working group composition | Action taken and results delivered |
|---|--|--|
| <p>the Action Plan to better reflect the need for action on the implications of the climate change and adaptation;</p> <p>(e) identify international research needs into the effect of climate change on waterbirds and their habitats;</p> <p>(Resolution 3.17, all actions are resource permitting)</p> | | |
| <p>9. Review the experiences of countries where lead shot has been phased out or are endeavouring to phase it out and bring a guidance for approval by MOP (Resolution 2.2)</p> | <p>NK, EKM, GNO, WH, JK, JS, CL</p> | <p>This task was undertaken by the Secretariat, with Catherine Lehmann in charge, and was done in conjunction with an update of the general review of the lead shot issue, last produced in 2001 by Wetlands International. This was an IIP project to be done this triennium, so this general review will be in a similar format to the one of 2001. The review of experiences of countries where the phasing out of lead shot had already been completed was implemented as a second module to this project.</p> <p>The TC decided on the Terms of Reference for this work and was consulted on the review questionnaire as well as providing comments on drafts of the review as they became available. The product was finalised and signed off by the TC. It will be published as an information brochure shortly after MOP4.</p> |
| <p>10. Assess the guidelines prepared</p> | <p>DS, WH, SK, JM, RA, SD</p> | <p>The TC as a whole was involved in reviewing the guidelines and assessing the need for updating. It was recommended that the guidelines on the AEWA web site should be made more visible and easily accessible.</p> |

| Issue/task | Working group composition | Action taken and results delivered |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| under Action Plan paragraph 7.3 and formulate draft recommendations and/or resolutions relating to their development/update, content and implementation (Action Plan 7.6) | | The Secretariat has undertaken to improve the website presence of the guidelines and to make them easier to use. It was suggested that Guidelines No.9 (Guidelines for a waterbird monitoring protocol) may benefit from a revision. This work will be undertaken by Wetlands International, resources permitting, with the involvement of the Committee. The work in this group will continue over the following triennium. |

Overview of abbreviations of full names of the members of working groups (in alphabetical order):

| Abbreviation | Full name | Abbreviation | Full name |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| AH | Abdulmuala Hamza | JOS | John O'Sullivan |
| AS | Alfousseini Semega | JS | John Swift |
| BL | Bert Lenten | NK | Niels Kanstrup |
| CL | Catherine Lehmann | ON | Oliver Nasirwa |
| DS | David Stroud | OB | Olivier Biber |
| EYD | Elijah Yaw Danso | PC | Preben Clausen |
| FK | Florian Keil | RA | Rachelle Adam |
| GF | Gerardo Fragoso | RP | Robert Pople |
| GNO | Guy-Noel Olivier | SD | Sergey Dereliev |
| GRJ | Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi | SK | Sergey Khomenko |
| JCV | Jean-Christophe Vie | WH | Ward Hagemeyer |
| JK | Jelena Kralj | YM | Youssof Mungroo |
| JM | Jerome Mokoko | | |

Other activities of the Technical Committee over the past triennium 2006-2008

1. The TC reviewed, commented on and approved for submission to MOP4, drafts of Single Species Action Plans for seven waterbird species (see documents AEWA/MOP 4.29 to 4.35).
2. BirdLife International was commissioned to produce a revised format for AEWA Single Species Action Plans, in cooperation with the Wildfowl & Wetlands trust, Wetlands International and Rubicon Foundation. The TC was duly consulted and commented on drafts as they became available. The draft revised SSAP format was signed off for submission to MOP4 through the Standing Committee.
3. The TC was closely involved in the production of the updated review on the phase out of lead shot for hunting in wetlands, which was compiled by the Secretariat. The TC was consulted and commented on drafts as they became available. The review was signed off by the TC at its 8th meeting and is available as document AEWA/MOP 4.7.
4. Following the conclusions of the Report on the conservation status of waterbirds in the Agreement area (document AEWA/MOP 4.8) the TC discussed and suggested a list of amendments to Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan. These proposals for amendments were sponsored by Italy. Other amendments to the Action Plan discussed and suggested by the TC were the following: (1) small amendment in the wording of paragraph 2.1.2(d) in order to be aligned with the previous paragraph 2.1.1(c); (2) amendments to paragraph 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan on frequency of update of international reviews and (3) amendment in paragraph 4.1.4 of the outdated deadline for phase out of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. These proposals were sponsored by Croatia (1 and 2) and Libya (3) (see document AEWA/MOP 4.24 and Draft Resolution 4.11).
5. The TC Rules of Procedures were reviewed at each meeting and corrections and amendments suggested. New elements were added with regard to procedures of nomination and election of TC members, which are now submitted to MOP4 for approval as TC Modus Operandi, which shall supersede the RoP (see Draft Resolution 4.19).
6. At each meeting the TC reviewed the progress made in implementation of the AEWA International Implementation Priorities (IIP) 2006-2008 and gave directives to the Secretariat as to how to enhance the performance of implementation.
7. The TC reviewed project proposals at each meeting and intersessionally and provided advice on their funding to the Secretariat.
8. The Chair of the Technical Committee participated actively in the 4th and 5th AEWA Standing Committee meetings held on 20 to 21 November 2006 and 24 to 25 June 2008 respectively in Bonn, Germany.
9. The Vice Chair of the TC Ms Jelena Kralj represented the Chair of the AEWA TC at the CMS 14th Scientific Council meeting held from 14 to 17 March 2007 in Bonn, Germany.

Vote of Thanks

We would also like to express our thanks to the members and observers of the Technical Committee, and especially to the various intersessional working groups for their dedication and hard work, as well as to the Secretariat for their unflinching support and timely finalisation of discussion documents.