



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



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”

RESOLUTION 4.14¹

THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

Recalling Resolution 3.17 on Climate change and migratory waterbirds which instructed the Technical Committee, to give priority to an assessment of current evidence of the effects of changing climate on migratory waterbirds, to review the implications of modelled future patterns of climate change on waterbirds, and to outline possible means of adapting to these changes, and to report conclusions to a future session of the Meeting of Parties,

Noting the findings and recommendations of the Review of the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within the African-Eurasian region (document AEWA/MOP 4.27),

Acknowledging unequivocal evidence of change to global climate systems, apparent from increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, redistribution of precipitation, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea levels,

Recognising that scientific modelling shows that migratory waterbirds throughout the Agreement area are likely to be increasingly adversely affected by climate change through geographic shifts of their breeding, staging and wintering grounds; loss and fragmentation of their habitats; changes in timing of seasonal aspects in their life cycle; and possible long-term changes in their survival and productivity,

Further recognizing that socio-economic consequences of climate change are likely to pose an additional negative impact on migratory waterbirds, because of increase in human demand for water resources and associated changes in agriculture and water management practices,

Conscious that species with small populations and/or ranges (especially where this is highly fragmented), species associated with threatened or vulnerable habitats, and species with specialist ecological requirements are those considered most at risk from climate change,

Further noting that species or populations are particularly vulnerable when they are associated with montane habitats, habitats on poleward edges and seasonal wetlands in arid, semi-arid and sub-arid regions,

Also noting that, on the basis of current scientific knowledge, two species listed in Annex 2 of the Agreement are judged to be critically threatened by climate change, seven are considered highly threatened, 14 considered moderately threatened, and a further 61 judged to experience some threat from climate change; but *Also noting* that knowledge is still not sufficient to fully predict impacts of climate change on migratory waterbirds,

Acknowledging that some Range States lack the expertise and finances to provide adequate conservation responses to the impacts of climate change, and

¹ Please note that the number of this resolution has changed; it was previously Draft Resolution 4.15.

Thanking the United Kingdom for the provision of resources that have facilitated a review of the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within African-Eurasian flyways (document AEWA/MOP 4.27), and the development of Conservation Guidelines (document AEWA/MOP 4.28) on means of adaptation to such impacts.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Calls upon* Contracting Parties to develop and strengthen climate change-related research, monitoring and conservation action for waterbirds, in particular towards vulnerable species and populations as described in document AEWA/MOP 4.27 (Report on the effects of climate change on migratory waterbirds within the African-Eurasian Flyways), and to focus future research on possible means of adaptation of waterbird species to climate change;
2. *Instructs* the Secretariat to assist in gathering and disseminating knowledge and expertise on climate-related waterbird research at national and international scales;
3. *Requests* the Technical Committee to identify further research priorities that will inform future adaptation measures, and to bring these to the next session of the Meeting of Parties for possible inclusion in the Action Plan;
4. *Urges* Contracting Parties to designate and establish comprehensive and coherent networks of adequately managed protected sites as well as other adequately managed sites, to accommodate range-shifts and facilitate waterbirds' dispersal;
5. *Further requests* the Technical Committee to assess whether the existing international networks of sites are sufficient for the protection of migratory waterbirds, including the projected climate change effects, and if necessary, to propose to the next session of the Meeting of the Parties which additional complementary approaches should be taken;
6. *Urges* Contracting Parties and other Range States to, as far as possible, maintain the ecological character of the sites important for waterbird populations under changing climate conditions through appropriate management measures, whether legislative, voluntary or traditional, and by integrating migratory waterbird interests into climate change adaptation measures such as flood prevention measures; and
7. *Further urges* Contracting Parties and other Range States to provide wider habitat protection for species with dispersed breeding ranges, migration routes or winter ranges where the site conservation approach would have little effect, especially under climate change conditions.