



FIFTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
24 – 25 June 2008, Bonn, Germany

Draft revised format for AEWA Single Species Action Plans

INTRODUCTION

Since its entry into force in 1999 AEWA has compiled and approved eight Single Species Action Plans and another seven are in the pipeline (to be submitted for approval by MOP4). The format for SSAP which is currently used was developed by BirdLife International and was approved by MOP2 in September 2002. Useful experience was gained during SSAP preparation processes and during their implementation. It was therefore suggested that the SSAP format would benefit from a revision.

This work was commissioned to BirdLife International, which also involved other organisations with experience in preparation and implementation of AEWA SSAP. The present document was compiled by Boris Barov (BirdLife International) with contributions from Baz Hughes and Peter Cranswick (WWT), Szabolcs Nagy (Wetlands International), Nicola Crockford (RSPB) and Umberto Gallo-Orsi (Rubicon Foundation).

The draft revised SSAP format aims at shortening the actual plan, which in turn will make it a simpler, more readable and comprehensible document. Much of the background information will be moved to annexes and whenever possible they will be uploaded and maintained in the internet environment.

The draft revised SSAP format is currently with the AEWA Technical Committee for consultation and the final draft will be compiled following submitted comments. Feedback from the Technical Committee is expected by 27 June and the revised SSAP format will be finalised shortly afterwards.

ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee is requested to principally approve the revised SSAP format for submission to the 4th session of the Meeting of the Parties with the provision that the final draft will additionally reflect comments received from the Technical Committee.

**Revised Format for the
AEWA International Single Species Action Plan**

[Draft: 15 May 2008]

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With contributions from:
Wetlands International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Rubicon Foundation

For the Secretariat of the
African Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement

Draft v. 1.2
May 2008

Introduction to the revised Single Species Action Plan format

International Single Species Action Plans are the key instrument developed under AEWA for the purpose of implementing coordinated measures to restore and/or maintain migratory waterbird species in favourable conservation status.

In 2002, the AEWA Secretariat requested BirdLife International to develop a format for International Single Species Action Plans drawn up under the Agreement. The SSAP developed then, has been in use for five years. Ten species have been subject to action planning using the SSAP format. In addition, the format has been widely accepted and used by international organisations (such as the EU). Thus, considerable practical experience in SSAP development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and revision has been accumulated, which allows a critical review of the process and the document template to be made.

In 2008 AEWA asked BirdLife International to evaluate the performance and revise the SSAP format, based on their experience. A key group of representatives of BirdLife International, Wetlands International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and the Rubicon Foundation gathered in February 2008 in Brussels to undertake this review.

Following this meeting a revised version of the SSAP format was developed and a detailed Guidelines document to support its users was developed.

The revised SSAP format is simpler, clearer and will lead to more focused action plans, listing a coherent set of actions based on sound logic.

The descriptive sections of the SSAP have been shortened and simplified in structure, in order to concentrate on essential baseline information about the species life history, conservation status and measures. Other documents (eg Conservation Status Assessment Reports and scientific articles) should be referred to in the SSAP when providing detailed background. In all cases, such documents should be mentioned in the list of references.

The SSAP format follows a log-frame approach, which has been simplified to the basic components in order to make it as easy as possible for planners and those who implement, monitor and update the plan. The threat section and the framework for action are closely related and follow a cause-effect logical link. Therefore actions lead to results that will be key in determining the success of the plan objectives. Action and result priorities are determined from the threat prioritization, which is based on the level of impact of threats on the population.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Szabolcs Nagy (WI), Baz Hughes and Peter Cranswick (WWT), Nicola Crockford (RSPB), Umberto Gallo-Orsi (Rubicon Foundation) for their useful

contribution to the revision process and for sharing their experience with action plans. Thanks also to all compilers and reviewers of action plans that have worked with BirdLife International and other organisations in developing this new SSAP format.

Special thanks to Sergey Dereliev (AEWA) for his guidance and support for the SSAP process and for this revision.

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Front Cover

- ✓ International single species action plan for the *English name /scientific name/ (also mention for which sub-species or population if relevant)*
- ✓ Portrait of species
- ✓ Lifespan of plan or date of adoption
- ✓ Logos

Inside Front cover

- ✓ Name of institution that commissioned plan, together with any other funders supporting the planning process.
- ✓ Compiler(s) including contact details
- ✓ List of contributors
- ✓ Milestones in the production of the Plan
- ✓ Name and contact details of official international species working group or other existing species working groups and a message “Please, send any additional information or comments regarding this action plan to this working group, email: xxxxx” or specify other more appropriate contact, giving email address.
- ✓ Recommended citation incl. ISSN.

Geographical scope of the action plan

1. *Map based on political map with state boundaries, and colour/shade indicated breeding and wintering range as quick reference where the action plans applies)*

Table 1 Range states for which this Acion Plan is relevant

Breeding	Migration	Wintering
<i>List of countries</i>	<i>List of countries</i>	<i>List of countries</i>

FOREWORD

- ✓ If appropriate e.g. to enhance buy-in and implementation of the plan, a foreword by one or more relevant officials.

0 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ✓ No more than 2 pages. The style should be simple, non technical, and ideally bullet points, covering the following headings:

- ✓ Conservation status (Global, Regional and sub-regional (e.g. EU) according to BirdLife International and any other key references such as Wetlands International WPE) and reason for it e.g. moderate decline.
- ✓ International legal status
- ✓ Population delineation for species with several populations, or where plan concerns just one of several populations (*eg* Icelandic Whooper Swan)
- ✓ Brief summary of population size and trend, geographic distribution, habitats and movements
- ✓ Principal threats affecting the species
- ✓ Overall goal of plan
- ✓ Objectives and top priority actions

1 - BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The biological assessment section should cover the following headings:

Taxonomy and biogeographic populations

- ✓ Notes (where relevant) explaining the taxonomic status of the species / sub-species/biogeographic population dealt with by the action plan should be made clear

Distribution throughout the annual cycle

- ✓ Very brief description of distribution and movements, including info on timing and location of breeding, spring migration and moulting etc. Country by country data provided in Figure 1 and Table 1.

Habitat requirements

- ✓ Brief description of the habitat used by the species.]
- ✓ Breeding (including nest site) and non breeding habitats used
- ✓ Feeding habitats
- ✓ Habitat description could include also important habitat requirements for the species, if these are known (e.g. ensure at least 15 cm of standing water in spring)

Survival and productivity

- ✓ Summary of available information (figures, trends) on generation length, age of first breeding, clutch size, productivity, survival of the age classes (adult, juvenile, chick, nest) and factors affecting it.

Population size and trend

- ✓ Ideally for each biogeographic population, current population and historical and recent trends in population size and range (breeding, wintering, migration).

Table 2 Population size and trend by country

Country	Breeding No.	Quality	Year(s) of the estimate	Breeding Population trend in the last 10 years (or 3 generations)	Quality	Maximum size of migrating or non breeding populations in the last 10 years (or 3 generations)	Quality	Year(s) of the estimate
<i>Country 1</i>								
Totals								

2 - THREATS

The threats section should cover the following headings:

General overview of threats

- ✓ *A paragraph mentioning the most important threats and their impacts.*

List of critical and important threats

- ✓ *Follow a descending priority order of threats, starting with the most important.*

Name of threat

[Description]

Importance: (critical, high, medium, low, local, unknown)

The importance of each threat is given for the global population (and/or each biogeographical population dealt with in the action plan).

- ✓ *A full account of threats should also be given as Annex 1.*

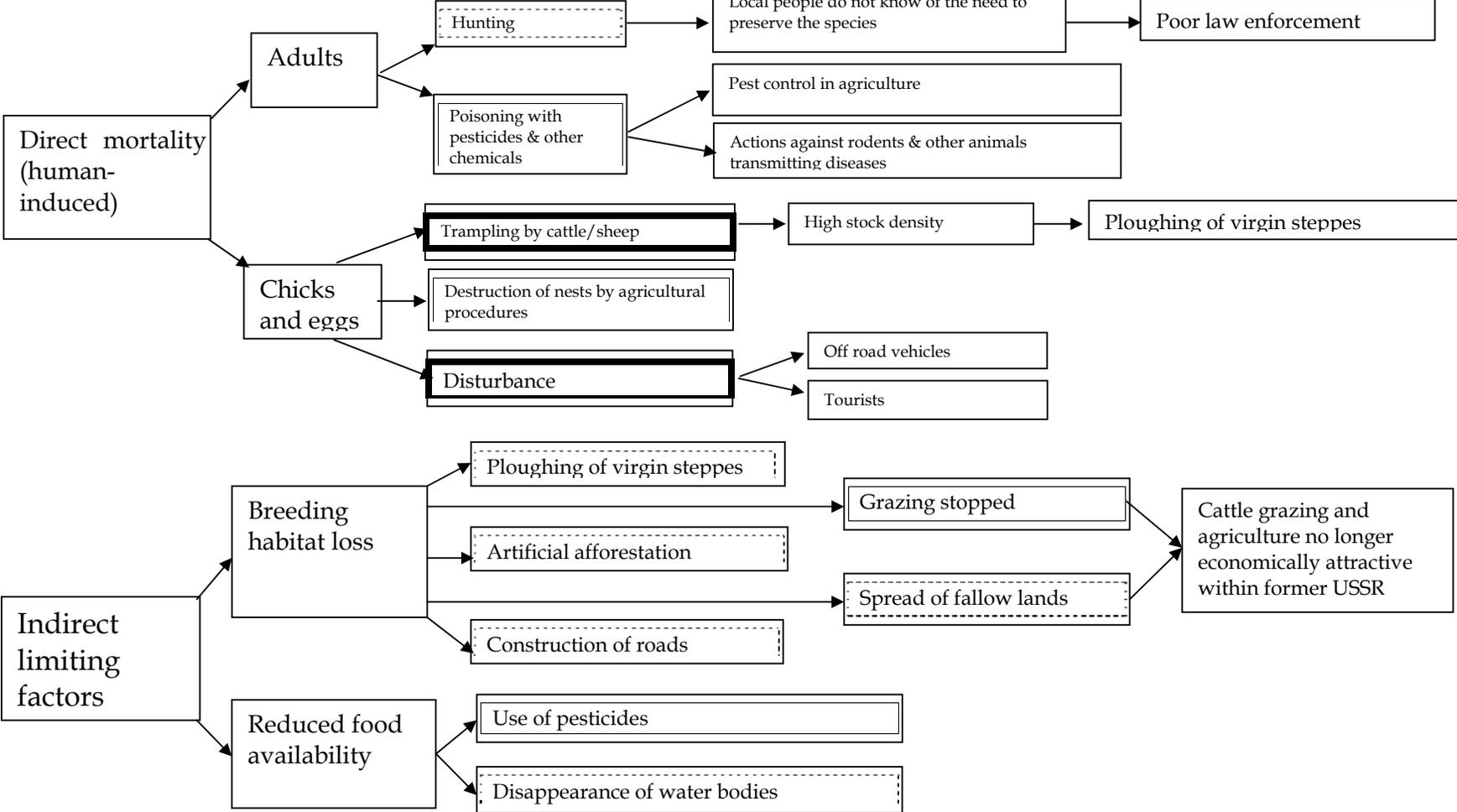
Problem tree

- ✓ *The problem tree should be included as a figure.*
- ✓ *It should be made clear and focused, covering the critical and important threats, not all threats.*
- ✓ *Threats that affect distinct biogeographical populations differently should be flagged up in the problem tree accordingly, showing to which biogeographic population they refer to.*
- ✓ *An example of a problem tree is given as Figure 2.*

Population Viability Analysis

- ✓ *A summary paragraph of the main findings of PVA if available.*
- ✓ *If possible, a PVA should be developed for the species/population and used during SSAP preparation to assess the importance of threats according to their effects on the population.*
- ✓ *It is recommended to use the simplest PVA sufficient for the problem in question.*
- ✓ *PVA can also highlight knowledge gaps about the population parameters or species biology.*

Figure 2 Problem tree (example) (solid frame - high impact; normal - medium impact; dashed - low impact)



3 - POLICIES AND LEGISLATION RELEVANT FOR MANAGEMENT.

International conservation and legal status of the species

- ✓ *List of relevant international legislation and instruments*
 - ✓ African-Eurasian Migratory Water bird Agreement (column and criteria)
 - ✓ Global Red List Status and criteria fulfilled
 - ✓ Regional Red List Statuses¹
 - ✓ EU Birds Directive Annex
 - ✓ Bonn Convention Appendix
 - ✓ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Appendix
 - ✓ Other conventions / agreements or regional prioritisation should be used as appropriate (Bern Convention Appendix, ACAP, Barcelona Convention, etc)

National policies, legislation and ongoing activities

- ✓ National nature conservation and related legislation
- ✓ Sectoral programmes (eg Rural Development Plans, Forestry Development Plans, etc)

4 - FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Goal (1)

- ✓ *This is the overall long-term goal to which the plan will contribute, but not achieve on its own. It is only one.*
- ✓ *In most cases, one of the two suggested goals could be used:*
 - 1) Remove the species/population from the Red List/Annex I AEWA (for Red List species)
 - 2) Restore species to Favourable Conservation Status (for non Red List species)

Objectives (1-3)

Objective 1

Objective 2

...

Results (3-6):

- ✓ *Results to be numbered following the objectives.*

Result 1.1

Result 1.2

¹ Eg European and EU status according to BirdLife International

Actions:

- ✓ Actions to be numbered following the results.

Action 1.1.1

Action 1.2.1

Action 1.2.2

- ✓ Actions should be prioritized as:

- Essential
- High
- Medium
- Low

- ✓ **Time scales** should be attached to each Action using the following scale:

- Immediate: completed within the next year
- Short: completed within the next 3 years
- Medium: completed within the next 5 years
- Long: completed within the next 10 years
- Ongoing: currently being implemented and should continue
- Completed: completed during preparation of the SSAP

- ✓ Table 3 presents the results under each objective, followed by the actions grouped by results. Under each action, a list of countries (using ISO codes for short if many) where its implementation is relevant.

- ✓ Against each action, the organisations responsible for its implementation are also listed, as concretely as possible.

Table 3 Actions corresponding to the results and ranked according to their importance, following from the problem tree.

<i>Objective: Example:</i> Negative population trend reversed to positive.				
<i>Result</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time scale</i>	<i>Organisations responsible</i>
<p>Example: Mortality of chicks in breeding areas reduced by 20%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to reduce clutch and chick mortality clarified and widely advertised to farmers / land-users, firstly in protected areas Applicable to: AU, HU, CZ, SK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short 	Research institutes and governmental agencies developing agri-environmental measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce system to manage grazing pressure in protected areas within tolerance limits of species (1,5 LU/ha) Applicable to: AU, HU, CZ, SK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium 	Protected area managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Favourable habitat management in breeding areas supported through agri-environmental schemes. Applicable to: All countries with breeding populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium 	Ministries of agriculture and environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeding success monitored annually Applicable to: All countries with breeding populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short, then ongoing 	NGOs and research institutes, protected areas managers

5 - REFERENCES

Reference list of the most relevant literature used for the preparation of the action plan.

ANNEX 1

Threats importance at population/group of countries level

Threat score	Population 1	Population 2	Population X
1. Habitat Loss/Degradation (human induced)	<i>Threat score</i>	<i>Threat score</i>	<i>Threat score</i>
1.1. Zxxx			
1.2. Zyyy			
1.3. ...			
2. Direct mortality			
2.1. Xxxx			
2.2. ...			

Notes:

- ✓ The threats description should reflect the actual understanding of the situation with the species, according to the latest available knowledge and the workshop participants' best judgement. It is not necessary to follow a formal threat classification as the logical analysis and cause-effect relationships among the main threats are the important aspects to focus the plan on.
- ✓ Threats are not hierarchical, but clustered according to type of effect.
- ✓ Threat score: Critical, High, Medium, Low, Local, Unknown.

ANNEX 2

- ✓ Data for this table could be obtained from the BirdLife International World Bird database and checked to be up to date.
- ✓ It should be indicated when the WBDB was accessed {date}.

Most important sites for the species and their status.

Country	International and national name	Area (ha)	Location		Population		Year	Season	Accuracy	Protected areas name	Type of protected area	Protection status
			Lat	Long	Min	Max						
Country 1												

NOTES

- ✓ **Population Min - Max.** For breeding ('season' column), figures are usually given in pairs; for other seasons, figures are given in individuals
- ✓ **Season:** Breeding, Migration, Non breeding visitor(wintering)
- ✓ **Accuracy: Good (Observed)** = based on reliable or representative quantitative data derived from complete counts or comprehensive measurements.
Good (Estimated) = based on reliable or representative quantitative data derived from sampling or interpolation.
Medium (Estimated) = based on incomplete quantitative data derived from sampling or interpolation.
Medium (Inferred) = based on incomplete or poor quantitative data derived from indirect evidence.
Poor (Suspected) = based on no quantitative data, but guesses derived from circumstantial evidence.
- ✓ **Protected Area name** = Nature Reserve, National Park, Ramsar site, etc.
- ✓ **Type of protected area:** IUCN Category
- ✓ **Protection status:** level of overlap between the IBA and a National or International protected area.

ANNEX 3

✓ All tables in this Annex to be filled in advance of workshop by questionnaire

National legal status.

Country	Legal protection	For game species, give opening/closing dates
Country 1		

Recent conservation measures.

Country	Is there a national action plan for the species?	Is there a national [<i>Species</i>] project / working group?
Country 1		<i>Provide with links only if they exist</i>

Ongoing monitoring schemes for the species.

Country	Is there a national survey / monitoring programme?	Is there a monitoring programme in protected areas?
Country 1		

Overview of the coverage of the species in networks of sites with legal protection status.

Country	Percentage of national population included in IBAs	Percentage of population included in Ramsar sites	Percentage of population included in SPAs ¹	Percentage of population included in protected areas under national law
Country 1				

✓ This table could be generated automatically by BirdLife WBDB on request, SSAP compilers may use classes instead of real figures: 0-10 (almost none), 10-50 (less than half), 50-90 (more than half), 90-100% (all)

¹ This is relevant only for European Union member states. Any other regional (legal) protection should be mentioned in next column.

GUIDELINES ON PRODUCING AEWA SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended to support action plan compilers in developing Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) using the AEWA SSAP format [*reference to the AEWA document*]. They follow the structure of the AEWA SSAP format and provide explanatory notes for each section.

Step Chart

Step 1: Compile a list of experts to be involved and consulted throughout the action plan drafting process.

Step 2: Undertake desk research and data collection of the latest available information relevant for sections 1-3 (biological assessment, threats, policies and legislation) of the SSAP.

Step 3: Send out materials for preparatory reading by the experts taking part in the SSAP workshop. This information should include the draft texts for sections 1-3, and data tables in Annexes, draft problem tree and supporting information (e.g. population viability analyses).

Step 5: Carry out SSAP workshop covering: review of data and draft texts, threats analysis, scoping and strategy of the SSAP, including aim, objectives, results, important actions and responsibilities.

Step 6: Prepare first draft of the SSAP and send out for consultation to species experts and AEWA national focal points.

Step 7: Incorporate comments, produce second draft and submit to AEWA Technical Committee.

Step 8: Incorporate comments from AEWA Technical Committee and submit for official adoption by AEWA.

Front Cover

- ✓ International single species action plan for the *English name /scientific name/* (also mention for which sub-species or population if relevant).
- ✓ Portrait of species.
Lifespan of the plan and date of adoption (and number of edition if not the first edition). The time-span of the SSAP is set at 10 years or 3 generation lengths for the species concerned (whichever of the two periods is shorter). The rationale behind this time-span is a pragmatic decision. Official adoption and endorsement of action plans often takes from several months to more than a year, and implementation of some measures may require even longer periods (e.g. legislation and policy changes, implementation of large projects such as LIFE in the EU, etc). Experience shows that there had been difficulties in keeping up to date with monitoring and revision of action plans as their number increases. There is also a trade off between the time and effort needed to update the plans and that needed to implement them. Therefore a longer period, than the initially intended 3-5 years was deemed necessary.
- ✓ Logos.

Inside Front Cover

- ✓ Name of institution that commissioned the plan, together with any other funders supporting the planning process.
- ✓ Compiler(s) including contact details.
- ✓ List of contributors, listed alphabetically by country, with a separate category for international contributors. For each contributor indicate organisation, as appropriate, and country.
- ✓ Milestones in the production of the plan including details of any workshops held, dates of each draft, dates of approval by the AEWA Technical Committee, notes on special opinions or dissent from Contracting Parties, date of adoption by MOP.
- ✓ Name and contact details of official international species working group or other existing species working groups and a message “Please, send any additional information or comments regarding this action plan to this working group, email: xxxxx” or specify other more appropriate contact, giving email address.
- ✓ Recommended citation incl. ISSN.

Geographical Scope of the Action Plan

The geographical scope of the SSAP covers the natural distribution of the biogeographical population for which the plan is developed. It should be presented in a simple and readily understandable way as a map and a table.

2. Map of global distribution with colour/shade indicating countries of occurrence (breeding, and wintering, migration) - as a quick reference to where the action plan applies.
3. Table 1 listing the same information plus (where relevant), entitled ‘*This plan should be implemented by the following states*’. The table should list all countries where the SSAP has to be implemented, i.e. the countries having breeding, wintering or migrating population of the species. Additionally, below the table, a list of the countries in which the species does not regularly occur but where actions are required (e.g. eradicating invasive alien species or important for international trade involving the species).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary should be a succinct version of the whole action plan. It should summarize the most important information that a busy official needs to know about the species in order to prioritise and facilitate implementation of the plan. It should be no longer than two pages and should cover the following points:

- ✓ Threat status (global, regional and sub-regional (e.g. EU) according to BirdLife International and any other key references such as Wetlands International WPE) and reason for it (e.g. moderate decline);
- ✓ International status under legal instruments and conventions;
- ✓ Population delineation for species with several populations, or where the plan concerns just one of several populations (e.g. Icelandic Whooper Swan);
- ✓ Brief summary of population size and trend, geographic distribution, habitats and movements. The AEWA Conservation Status Report provides population trend estimates of the biogeographical populations and should be used as the reference/starting point;
- ✓ Principal threats affecting the species;
- ✓ Aim of the plan;
- ✓ Objectives and top priority actions.

1 - BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

This section provides an overview of the taxonomy, life history, demography, distribution and ecology of the species. Only information relevant to the threats or to conservation activities should be included, but the threats themselves should not be discussed here. The text can cross-refer to such discussion in the threats section.

One or more map(s) of key stages of the life cycle (e.g. breeding and non-breeding distribution, flyways, key stopover sites, historical range) should be included as Figure 1 (BirdLife produced species range maps should be used if appropriate).

For plans for species that are huntable in the EU, a web link should be added to the dates of spring migration and breeding on the European Commission website³.

The following information on population size and trend by country should be presented as Table 2:

- **Breeding No.** Specify if pairs or individuals. The same unit should be used for all breeding countries.
- **Quality: Good** = *Reliable quantitative data available (e.g. atlas, survey or monitoring data) for the whole period and country. Medium* = *generally well known, but only poor or incomplete quantitative data available. Poor* = *Poorly known with no quantitative data available. Unknown* = *information on quality not available.*
- **Breeding Population trend** in the last 10 years (or three generations): If possible, calculate the actual trend in % or use the following categories: **Large decline** (>=30%), **Moderate decline** (10-29%), **Small decline** (0-9%), **Stable** (<10% decline and <10% increase), **Small increase** (0-9%), **Moderate increase** (10-29%), **Large increase** (>=30%), **Unknown** (insufficient data).
- **Migration & Non Breeding No.:** Population numbers in individuals.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/key_concepts_en.htm

- Use separate tables for each biogeographic population.

2 - THREATS

This chapter gives detailed information on threats and their impact on the population at global and, where appropriate, biogeographical population level. Where data are available, it can also include an overview of the threats and their relative importance at a country level. Threats should be listed if they are known (or have the realistic potential) to cause population decline. Only those for which specific actions will be developed should be described. Threats of more global character (e.g. climate change, avian influenza and others) if important, should be mentioned in the threats overview paragraph and actions to address them should not be included.

Threats should be presented in descending priority order according to the magnitude of their negative impact on the population.

The threats table in Annex 1 should be compiled prior to the SSAP workshop, based on current knowledge collected from the contributors. The threats listed should then be analysed for cause and effect using a participatory *problem-tree* analysis that will focus the action plan on the main threats.

Common sense and best available information should guide the decision-making process when ranking threats. Ideally, threats should be ranked using a quantification of their magnitude. However, if precise data on the threat magnitude is not available, a decision should be taken based on best available data and expert judgement.

The following categories should be used when ranking threats. If information is available, ranks should correspond to quantitative characteristics as described. If not this should be made clear in the text. The percentage values for population changes are for guidance only, and compilers and delegates at the workshop should not debate precise values at great length. Ensuring that the ranking is consistent and correct in relative terms is the important point.

- **Critical:** a factor causing or likely to cause very rapid declines (>30% over 10 years);
- **High:** a factor causing or likely to cause rapid declines (20-30% over 10 years);
- **Medium:** a factor causing or likely to cause relatively slow, but significant, declines (10-20% over 10 years);
- **Low:** a factor causing or likely to cause fluctuations;
- **Local:** a factor causing or likely to cause negligible declines;
- **Unknown:** a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is unknown to what extent.

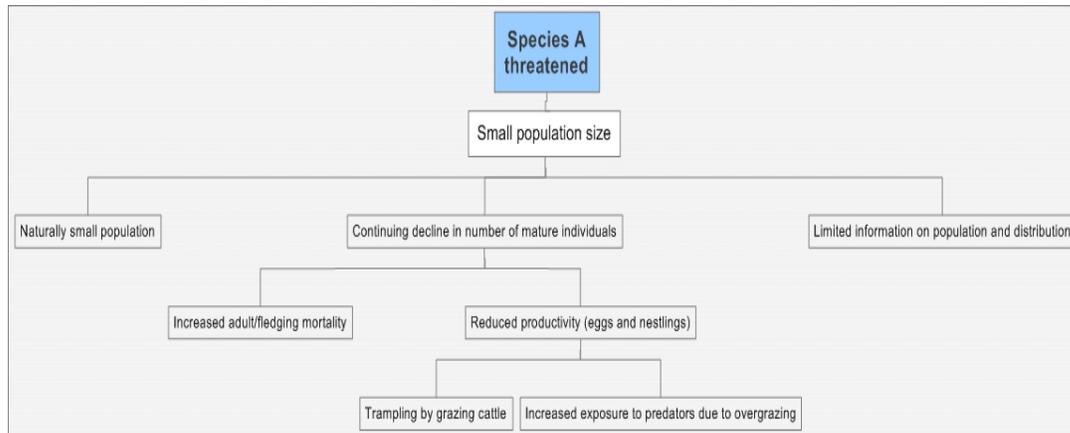
If gaps in knowledge are likely to affect the understanding of the impact of threats, these should be reflected as research actions.

Problem Tree

Prior to the SSAP workshop the action plan compiler should prepare a draft problem tree, based on the information collected from the contributors. The problem tree helps to explain how the threats affect the populations and how they are related to their causes. It is built using the cause-effect relationships of threats and their impacts. The problem tree should be revised by the workshop participants. It provides a common understanding on the range and importance of threats by the relevant experts. It should be focused on those problems that are

realistic in the scope of what a SSAP can achieve and should be used as a basis for the identification of actions. The figure below provides a generalised example of a problem tree.

Example problem tree.



The SSAP workshop discussions on the draft problem tree aim to reveal the key threats affecting the species. Once these have been agreed, the root causes of all of the effects should be determined, which may for example include socio-economic factors. Although habitat loss and degradation are major causes of population declines, this form of analysis often indicates that this is not the immediate reason for the decline.

Each threat should then be prioritised as critical, high, medium, low or unknown depending on the intensity with which it is believed to contribute to the demise of the species.

The final problem tree should be included as Figure 2 in the SSAP.

Population Viability Analysis

In some cases, when sufficient data are available, population viability analysis (PVA) can be useful to assess the impact of threats on populations, in relation to the demographic parameters affected (e.g. survival or productivity).

- ✓ If a PVA is to be used, it should be developed for the species/population prior to the SSAP workshop.
- ✓ The simplest PVA sufficient for the problem in question should be used.
- ✓ PVA can also highlight knowledge gaps about the population parameters or species biology.

3 - POLICIES AND LEGISLATION RELEVANT FOR MANAGEMENT.

This chapter gives a list of the international legal designations and an overview of relevant international and national policies that have a direct effect on the species.

The overview analysis, combined with the information on distribution, trends and threats, provides the basis for the identification of the objectives and actions for the action plan. It should highlight the gaps in legal protection, conservation actions and policies in all range states. It should lead to the proposed actions needed to fill them.

The overview is based on country by country listing that covers legal status (including hunting statistics and hunting season), recent conservation measures (including national action plans, national species working groups), monitoring (incl. national monitoring programmes, and monitoring programmes in protected areas) and coverage with site protection measures (including the most important sites for the species, their legal protection status, and ideally the proportion of the national population covered by IBAs/protected areas).

International conservation and legal status of the species

A list of relevant international legal instruments applicable to the species should be presented.

For example:

- ✓ African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (column and criteria).
- ✓ Global Red List Status and criteria under which the species qualifies.
- ✓ Regional Red List Statuses⁴.
- ✓ EU Birds Directive Annex.
- ✓ Bonn Convention Appendix.
- ✓ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Appendix.
- ✓ Other conventions / agreements or regional prioritisation should be used as appropriate (Bern Convention Appendix, ACAP, Barcelona Convention etc).

National Policies, Legislation and Ongoing Activities

This section provides an overview of the information on legal status, conservation measures, monitoring and site protection measures carried out for the species on a national level in the range states. The country by country information is given as a table in Annex 3.

4 - FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This part of the document contains the goal, the objectives and the strategy of the action plan. It identifies the biological targets and the results that will lead to eliminating the threats and recovering the species. It also contains the actions necessary to achieve these results, along with their priority ratings, timescales and implementing organisations.

The objectives, result, actions, priorities, timescales and implementing organisations should be presented as Table 3. Under each action, the countries where implementation is relevant should be listed (using ISO codes⁵ for short if many).

Standardization of terminology is necessary in order to maintain coherence between the different plans and help implementation, evaluation and revision. The following terminology is considered to be the most appropriate for the SSAP: Goal, Objectives, Results and Actions.

Goal

- ✓ This is the overall long-term goal to which the plan will contribute, but not achieve on its own.
- ✓ In most cases, one of two suggested goals should be used:
 - 1) *Remove the species/population from the Red List/Annex I AEWA* (for Red List species).
 - 2) *Restore species to Favourable Conservation Status* (for non Red List species).

⁴ E.g. European and EU status according to BirdLife International

⁵ http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists/english_country_names_and_code_elements.htm

Objectives

- ✓ Objectives of the plan should be set as targets for population recovery, expressed in quantitative terms (population numbers, population trend) that the SSAP will achieve both within and after its life time. They should be expressed as measurable numerical population parameters (e.g. number of breeding pairs, number of individuals, population increase, observed increases in survival and productivity of XX% etc).
- ✓ Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound). If appropriate, a breakdown of the objectives as specific population targets may be allocated by country in a table.

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- ✓ Results are the underlying conditions that need to be achieved in order to accomplish each objective.
- ✓ Results are the direct consequences of successfully implemented actions.
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Actions:

- ✓ Actions are implemented in order to achieve the results. Justification for each action should be self-evident from the way it is formulated.
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- ✓ As with threats, a priority for each action should be stated (Essential, High, Medium, Low), using an agreed priority ranking process and the results of the SSAP workshop.

How to decide the priority order of actions?

Actions should be prioritized at the SSAP workshop in a logical way. The decision-making rationale may differ from species to species, but the general principle should be that actions are ranked according to their contribution to achieving the results and thus meeting the SSAP objectives. Prioritization of actions should also take into account biological needs, urgency, likelihood of success, and other factors that may vary according to species. In principle, highest priority actions should be the ones that address the threats with highest rank and this should correspond to the conclusions of the threats analysis and the objectives of the plan.

- ✓ **Time scales** should be attached to each Action using the following scale:
 - Immediate: completed within the next year.
 - Short: completed within the next 3 years.
 - Medium: completed within the next 5 years.
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Table 3. Action framework for the species / population.

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Result	Action	Priority	Time scale	Organisations responsible
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce system to manage grazing pressure in protected areas within tolerance limits of species (1,5 LU/ha) Applicable to: AU, HU, CZ, SK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium 	Protected area managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Favourable habitat management in breeding areas supported through agri-environmental schemes. Applicable to: All countries with breeding populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium 	Ministries of agriculture and environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeding success monitored annually Applicable to: All countries with breeding populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	Short, then ongoing	NGOs and research institutes, protected areas managers

5 - REFERENCES AND THE MOST RELEVANT LITERATURE

The reference list, in alphabetical order to the format given below, should contain only the key documents referred to in the action plan text, not general literature on the species. Titles of journals should be abbreviated as in the world List of Scientific Periodicals, or full names should be used.

The format should follow this example:

- Aunins, A. 2001a. Changes of lekking activity of Great Snipe during course of night and season in Latvia: recommendations for methods of searching for Great snipe leks and estimating lek size. Putni daba Supplement 1: 13 – 26
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GUIDELINES ON PRODUCING AEWA SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended to support action plan compilers in developing Single Species Action Plans (SSAPs) using the AEWA SSAP format [*reference to the AEWA document*]. They follow the structure of the AEWA SSAP format and provide explanatory notes for each section.

Step Chart

Step 1: Compile a list of experts to be involved and consulted throughout the action plan drafting process.

Step 2: Undertake desk research and data collection of the latest available information relevant for sections 1-3 (biological assessment, threats, policies and legislation) of the SSAP.

Step 3: Send out materials for preparatory reading by the experts taking part in the SSAP workshop. This information should include the draft texts for sections 1-3, and data tables in Annexes, draft problem tree and supporting information (e.g. population viability analyses).

Step 5: Carry out SSAP workshop covering: review of data and draft texts, threats analysis, scoping and strategy of the SSAP, including aim, objectives, results, important actions and responsibilities.

Step 6: Prepare first draft of the SSAP and send out for consultation to species experts and AEWA national focal points.

Step 7: Incorporate comments, produce second draft and submit to AEWA Technical Committee.

Step 8: Incorporate comments from AEWA Technical Committee and submit for official adoption by AEWA.

Front Cover

- ✓ International single species action plan for the *English name /scientific name/* (also mention for which sub-species or population if relevant).
- ✓ Portrait of species.
Lifespan of the plan and date of adoption (and number of edition if not the first edition). The time-span of the SSAP is set at 10 years or 3 generation lengths for the species concerned (whichever of the two periods is shorter). The rationale behind this time-span is a pragmatic decision. Official adoption and endorsement of action plans often takes from several months to more than a year, and implementation of some measures may require even longer periods (e.g. legislation and policy changes, implementation of large projects such as LIFE in the EU, etc). Experience shows that there had been difficulties in keeping up to date with monitoring and revision of action plans as their number increases. There is also a trade off between the time and effort needed to update the plans and that needed to implement them. Therefore a longer period, than the initially intended 3-5 years was deemed necessary.
- ✓ Logos.

Inside Front Cover

- ✓ Name of institution that commissioned the plan, together with any other funders supporting the planning process.
- ✓ Compiler(s) including contact details.
- ✓ List of contributors, listed alphabetically by country, with a separate category for international contributors. For each contributor indicate organisation, as appropriate, and country.
- ✓ Milestones in the production of the plan including details of any workshops held, dates of each draft, dates of approval by the AEWA Technical Committee, notes on special opinions or dissent from Contracting Parties, date of adoption by MOP.
- ✓ Name and contact details of official international species working group or other existing species working groups and a message “Please, send any additional information or comments regarding this action plan to this working group, email: xxxxx” or specify other more appropriate contact, giving email address.
- ✓ Recommended citation incl. ISSN.

Geographical Scope of the Action Plan

The geographical scope of the SSAP covers the natural distribution of the biogeographical population for which the plan is developed. It should be presented in a simple and readily understandable way as a map and a table.

4. Map of global distribution with colour/shade indicating countries of occurrence (breeding, and wintering, migration) - as a quick reference to where the action plan applies.
5. Table 1 listing the same information plus (where relevant), entitled ‘*This plan should be implemented by the following states*’. The table should list all countries where the SSAP has to be implemented, i.e. the countries having breeding, wintering or migrating population of the species. Additionally, below the table, a list of the countries in which the species does not regularly occur but where actions are required (e.g. eradicating invasive alien species or important for international trade involving the species).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary should be a succinct version of the whole action plan. It should summarize the most important information that a busy official needs to know about the species in order to prioritise and facilitate implementation of the plan. It should be no longer than two pages and should cover the following points:

- ✓ Threat status (global, regional and sub-regional (e.g. EU) according to BirdLife International and any other key references such as Wetlands International WPE) and reason for it (e.g. moderate decline);
- ✓ International status under legal instruments and conventions;
- ✓ Population delineation for species with several populations, or where the plan concerns just one of several populations (e.g. Icelandic Whooper Swan);
- ✓ Brief summary of population size and trend, geographic distribution, habitats and movements. The AEWA Conservation Status Report provides population trend estimates of the biogeographical populations and should be used as the reference/starting point;
- ✓ Principal threats affecting the species;
- ✓ Aim of the plan;
- ✓ Objectives and top priority actions.

1 - BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

This section provides an overview of the taxonomy, life history, demography, distribution and ecology of the species. Only information relevant to the threats or to conservation activities should be included, but the threats themselves should not be discussed here. The text can cross-refer to such discussion in the threats section.

One or more map(s) of key stages of the life cycle (e.g. breeding and non-breeding distribution, flyways, key stopover sites, historical range) should be included as Figure 1 (BirdLife produced species range maps should be used if appropriate).

For plans for species that are huntable in the EU, a web link should be added to the dates of spring migration and breeding on the European Commission website⁶.

The following information on population size and trend by country should be presented as Table 2:

- **Breeding No.** Specify if pairs or individuals. The same unit should be used for all breeding countries.
- **Quality: Good** = *Reliable quantitative data available (e.g. atlas, survey or monitoring data) for the whole period and country. Medium* = *generally well known, but only poor or incomplete quantitative data available. Poor* = *Poorly known with no quantitative data available. Unknown* = *information on quality not available.*
- **Breeding Population trend** in the last 10 years (or three generations): If possible, calculate the actual trend in % or use the following categories: **Large decline** (>=30%), **Moderate decline** (10-29%), **Small decline** (0-9%), **Stable** (<10% decline and <10% increase), **Small increase** (0-9%), **Moderate increase** (10-29%), **Large increase** (>=30%), **Unknown** (insufficient data).
- **Migration & Non Breeding No.:** Population numbers in individuals.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/key_concepts_en.htm

- Use separate tables for each biogeographic population.

2 - THREATS

This chapter gives detailed information on threats and their impact on the population at global and, where appropriate, biogeographical population level. Where data are available, it can also include an overview of the threats and their relative importance at a country level. Threats should be listed if they are known (or have the realistic potential) to cause population decline. Only those for which specific actions will be developed should be described. Threats of more global character (e.g. climate change, avian influenza and others) if important, should be mentioned in the threats overview paragraph and actions to address them should not be included.

Threats should be presented in descending priority order according to the magnitude of their negative impact on the population.

The threats table in Annex 1 should be compiled prior to the SSAP workshop, based on current knowledge collected from the contributors. The threats listed should then be analysed for cause and effect using a participatory *problem-tree* analysis that will focus the action plan on the main threats.

Common sense and best available information should guide the decision-making process when ranking threats. Ideally, threats should be ranked using a quantification of their magnitude. However, if precise data on the threat magnitude is not available, a decision should be taken based on best available data and expert judgement.

The following categories should be used when ranking threats. If information is available, ranks should correspond to quantitative characteristics as described. If not this should be made clear in the text. The percentage values for population changes are for guidance only, and compilers and delegates at the workshop should not debate precise values at great length. Ensuring that the ranking is consistent and correct in relative terms is the important point.

- **Critical:** a factor causing or likely to cause very rapid declines (>30% over 10 years);
- **High:** a factor causing or likely to cause rapid declines (20-30% over 10 years);
- **Medium:** a factor causing or likely to cause relatively slow, but significant, declines (10-20% over 10 years);
- **Low:** a factor causing or likely to cause fluctuations;
- **Local:** a factor causing or likely to cause negligible declines;
- **Unknown:** a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is unknown to what extent.

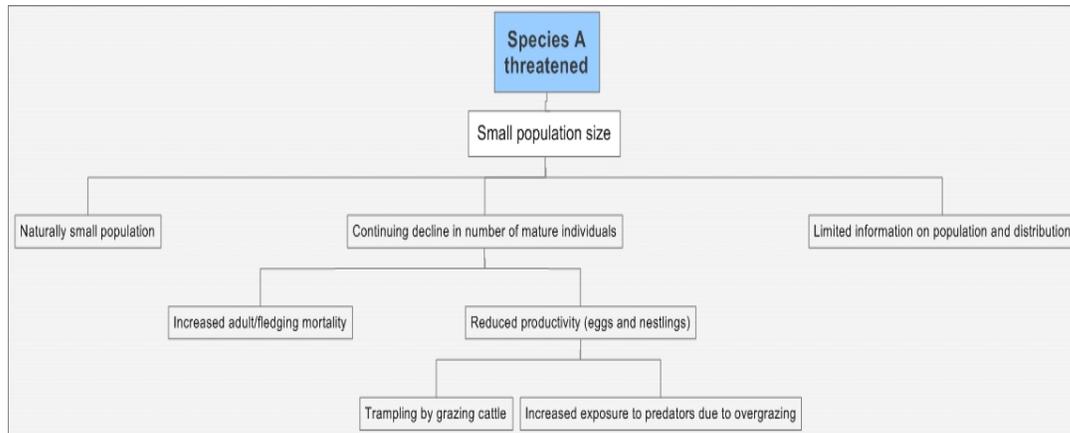
If gaps in knowledge are likely to affect the understanding of the impact of threats, these should be reflected as research actions.

Problem Tree

Prior to the SSAP workshop the action plan compiler should prepare a draft problem tree, based on the information collected from the contributors. The problem tree helps to explain how the threats affect the populations and how they are related to their causes. It is built using the cause-effect relationships of threats and their impacts. The problem tree should be revised by the workshop participants. It provides a common understanding on the range and importance of threats by the relevant experts. It should be focused on those problems that are

realistic in the scope of what a SSAP can achieve and should be used as a basis for the identification of actions. The figure below provides a generalised example of a problem tree.

Example problem tree.



The SSAP workshop discussions on the draft problem tree aim to reveal the key threats affecting the species. Once these have been agreed, the root causes of all of the effects should be determined, which may for example include socio-economic factors. Although habitat loss and degradation are major causes of population declines, this form of analysis often indicates that this is not the immediate reason for the decline.

Each threat should then be prioritised as critical, high, medium, low or unknown depending on the intensity with which it is believed to contribute to the demise of the species.

The final problem tree should be included as Figure 2 in the SSAP.

Population Viability Analysis

In some cases, when sufficient data are available, population viability analysis (PVA) can be useful to assess the impact of threats on populations, in relation to the demographic parameters affected (e.g. survival or productivity).

- ✓ If a PVA is to be used, it should be developed for the species/population prior to the SSAP workshop.
- ✓ The simplest PVA sufficient for the problem in question should be used.
- ✓ PVA can also highlight knowledge gaps about the population parameters or species biology.

3 - POLICIES AND LEGISLATION RELEVANT FOR MANAGEMENT.

This chapter gives a list of the international legal designations and an overview of relevant international and national policies that have a direct effect on the species.

The overview analysis, combined with the information on distribution, trends and threats, provides the basis for the identification of the objectives and actions for the action plan. It should highlight the gaps in legal protection, conservation actions and policies in all range states. It should lead to the proposed actions needed to fill them.

The overview is based on country by country listing that covers legal status (including hunting statistics and hunting season), recent conservation measures (including national action plans, national species working groups), monitoring (incl. national monitoring programmes, and monitoring programmes in protected areas) and coverage with site protection measures (including the most important sites for the species, their legal protection status, and ideally the proportion of the national population covered by IBAs/protected areas).

International conservation and legal status of the species

A list of relevant international legal instruments applicable to the species should be presented.

For example:

- ✓ African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (column and criteria).
- ✓ Global Red List Status and criteria under which the species qualifies.
- ✓ Regional Red List Statuses⁷.
- ✓ EU Birds Directive Annex.
- ✓ Bonn Convention Appendix.
- ✓ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Appendix.
- ✓ Other conventions / agreements or regional prioritisation should be used as appropriate (Bern Convention Appendix, ACAP, Barcelona Convention etc).

National Policies, Legislation and Ongoing Activities

This section provides an overview of the information on legal status, conservation measures, monitoring and site protection measures carried out for the species on a national level in the range states. The country by country information is given as a table in Annex 3.

4 - FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This part of the document contains the goal, the objectives and the strategy of the action plan. It identifies the biological targets and the results that will lead to eliminating the threats and recovering the species. It also contains the actions necessary to achieve these results, along with their priority ratings, timescales and implementing organisations.

The objectives, result, actions, priorities, timescales and implementing organisations should be presented as Table 3. Under each action, the countries where implementation is relevant should be listed (using ISO codes⁸ for short if many).

Standardization of terminology is necessary in order to maintain coherence between the different plans and help implementation, evaluation and revision. The following terminology is considered to be the most appropriate for the SSAP: Goal, Objectives, Results and Actions.

Goal

- ✓ This is the overall long-term goal to which the plan will contribute, but not achieve on its own.
- ✓ In most cases, one of two suggested goals should be used:
 - 1) *Remove the species/population from the Red List/Annex I AEWA* (for Red List species).
 - 2) *Restore species to Favourable Conservation Status* (for non Red List species).

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