



**7<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE AEWA STANDING COMMITTEE**  
*26 – 27 November 2011, Bergen, Norway*

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## **REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The current report covers the work of the AEWA Secretariat for the period between January 2009 and September 2011.

This report is divided into five sections:

1. General management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organisations. Issues relating to administration and finance are dealt with in document StC7.25;
2. Information management;
3. Implementation and compliance;
4. Project development;
5. Other activities and outputs.

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming mails, maintaining the Secretariat's extensive network, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Head of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

### **1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT**

#### **Recruitment of Parties**

The Democratic Republic of Ethiopia joined AEWA as of February 2010. The Republic of Chad and Montenegro have deposited their instruments of accession and will become Contracting Parties to AEWA as of 1 November 2011. For several other countries, notably Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Zambia and Swaziland, the process of joining the Agreement is reported to be at an advanced stage.

In line with the MOP4 recommendation to increase activities regarding the recruitment of Parties, the Secretariat has put a stronger focus on the membership development and, among other activities, organized a number of promotional workshops and meetings:

#### **The Russian Federation**

A promotional workshop for the Russian Federation was organised in Moscow on 30 - 31 March 2010 with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Moscow and the Government of Switzerland. The workshop, chaired by the AEWA Honorary Patron Dr. Gerard C. Boere, was attended by national and international experts and representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology.

For more information please see:

[http://www.unep-awea.org/news/news\\_elements/2010/moscow\\_workshop.htm](http://www.unep-awea.org/news/news_elements/2010/moscow_workshop.htm)

#### **Botswana, Comoros, Morocco, Seychelles, Swaziland**

The Coordinator for the African Initiative conducted two workshops (English and French) for participants from the Non-Contracting African countries, during the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium for AEWA (13 and 14 June 2010), in The Hague, the Netherlands. The participation of the representatives from these countries was sponsored in the framework of the African Initiative. Government representatives from Ghana and Guinea-Bissau and Senegal also participated at the workshop, to share the experiences of Contracting Parties.

The benefits of accession to AEWA were outlined, challenges faced in the accession process were identified, the experiences of some Contracting Parties were shared and advice was provided on possible ways forward.

#### Burkina Faso

On 23 to 24 September 2010, an information and awareness-raising workshop on the accession of Burkina Faso to AEWA took place in Loumbila, Burkina Faso. The workshop was jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment and Livelihoods in Burkina Faso (MECV) and the AEWA Secretariat, and its implementation was made possible thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from the Swiss Government. The workshop brought together 31 participants from the Burkina Faso public administration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation - MAECR, Ministry of Economy and Finance and Ministry of Environment and Livelihoods), non-governmental organizations (International Union for the Conservation of Nature – IUCN and the Foundation of Friends of Nature – NATURAMA, the BirdLife Partner in Burkina Faso), and the AEWA Secretariat. A final declaration was signed between the Ministry of Environment and Livelihoods and the AEWA Secretariat outlining the road map towards the accession of Burkina Faso to AEWA.

For more information please see:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news\\_elements/2010/workshop\\_burkina\\_faso.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2010/workshop_burkina_faso.htm)

#### Botswana, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

In December 2010 the Executive Secretary undertook a round trip to the countries of Botswana, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe and discussed the accession of these countries to AEWA and CMS with the officials from the respective Governments. Especially Zambia and Swaziland signalled that they would ratify AEWA soon.

#### Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

In March 2011 the Technical Officer and the Coordinator for the African Initiative paid a visit to Botswana to attend and facilitate the stakeholder workshop for the development of an International Single Species Action Plan for the Slaty Egret. At the end of the workshop, the Secretariat conducted a session aimed at promoting the accession to AEWA. Participants included Government representatives from Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Moreover, the Technical Officer and African Coordinator met with officials of the Government of Botswana and non-government institutions to discuss the accession of Botswana to AEWA.

#### Azerbaijan

The AEWA Secretariat organized a meeting at the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan in Baku on 26 May 2011 to follow up on accession discussions launched with the country several years ago. Ministry representatives confirmed that the accession process is ongoing and estimated that - depending on when a final sign off by the Cabinet of Ministers is obtained - AEWA could be ratified by the Parliament and signed by the President within a year.

#### Kazakhstan

In connection with ongoing Lesser White-fronted Goose conservation work facilitated by the AEWA Secretariat in Kazakhstan, the Secretariat has had several discussions with officials of the Government of Kazakhstan concerning the accession of Kazakhstan to AEWA. This was in particular the case during a national Lesser White-fronted Goose workshop organized by the Secretariat in Kazakhstan in October 2010 as well as at the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose Working Group in Finland in November/December 2010. The Secretariat understands that the accession process in Kazakhstan is quite advanced, yet some outstanding issues still remain.

### **Strategic cooperation with other Organizations**

#### Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats (Wings Over Wetlands - WOW)

At the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary symposium of AEWA, held in The Hague in June 2010, the WOW partner organizations Wetlands International, BirdLife International, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat and the AEWA Secretariat, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to continue the partnership that has been built up under the WOW project. The purpose of the MoC is to translate WOW's achievements into a long-term, collaborative, flyway-scale programme to achieve conservation of migratory

waterbirds and improved management of wetlands that incorporate the needs of people, biodiversity and ecosystem values and services in a changing environment. To this end, the partners will work together to fulfill the vision outlined in the current AEWA and Ramsar Strategic Plans, and the BirdLife Strategy and Wetlands International Strategic Intent as these relate to migratory waterbird conservation, and especially to fulfill the aims of the WOW project and build on and consolidate its outputs. Since the first Partnership meeting in February 2011, the AEWA Secretariat has taken on the role of Secretariat for the Flyway Partnership.

#### Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

A draft Memorandum of Cooperation between the CAFF and the AEWA Secretariat has been prepared and is being reviewed by the CAFF Secretariat, which is planning to present the final agreed version to the CAFF Board in October 2011. The purpose of this MOC will be to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives in regard to the conservation of seabirds and arctic birds and their habitats. Particularly the work of the CBird working group (Circumpolar Seabird Group) is of interest for AEWA.

## **2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

From 2006 until the end of 2010 the Associate Information Officer allocated 50 percent of his working time towards the *Wings over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project* where he has been functioning as Communication Officer for WOW. Hence, the time he could actually spend on purely AEWA-related communication issues during the course of the WOW project has been limited. To compensate for this, it was decided to divide some of the tasks among other team members and the Information Management within the Secretariat has evolved into a team effort. Since 2011 the time of the Associate Information Officer is fully dedicated to the Information Management of AEWA. However, the annual World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) campaign has developed significantly over the years, whereby the central coordination of the campaign has also been the task of the AEWA Information Officer over the past years. The WMBD campaign creates an additional work load to the regular tasks of the AEWA Information Unit, which can hardly be dealt with in the current team composition. The Secretariat is therefore currently considering different options with respect to the future handling of WMBD, including trying to get greater support from the CMS Secretariat and key NGOs to support the organization of the campaign.

The following is an overview of information management activities undertaken since January 2009:

#### **E-Newsletter**

The AEWA Electronic Newsletter, recommended in the Communication Strategy, has been sent out regularly, four to five times per year. The aim of the E-Newsletter is to inform the Agreement's network about recent AEWA activities and related news. Currently the E-Newsletter is sent out to over 2,800 people and new subscribers are joining via an online registration system on a regular basis. The E-Newsletter has evolved into one of the main communication tools available to the Secretariat and its production involves the entire Secretariat team.

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/e\\_newsletter\\_archive.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/e_newsletter_archive.htm)

#### **Finalization of the Online National Reporting System**

In the frame of a UNEP project, launched in 2006 and funded by the Government of Norway, to work on strengthening the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions through the strategic use of information/knowledge management among UNEP-administered MEAs, an online national reporting system has been developed for the national reports of the Contracting Parties to AEWA and CMS. The AEWA Secretariat, which has taken the lead in this project on behalf of AEWA and CMS, has been working very closely with UNEP-WCMC over the past years. The newly developed online reporting format was presented to MOP4 and adopted, and the Online National Reporting Tool, which was developed as a CMS Family tool and could be expanded to other instruments under CMS, was finalised in 2010/2011 in close collaboration between the AEWA Secretariat and UNEP-WCMC. Following up a request from the Parties to pre-populate

the online format where data are readily available, the AEWA Secretariat has contracted a consultant tasked with inserting all available information into the system in order to reduce the workload for Parties who will have to use the system for the first time prior to MOP5. AEWA Secretariat staff members have received training on the use of the online reporting system to enable the Secretariat to use its functionalities and be able to manage reporting cycles as of the MOP5 reporting cycle onwards.

The new format is expected to facilitate the collection, analysis and use of the information contained in Parties' national reports. However, the project urgently needs a follow-up project aiming at developing an analytical tool linked to the format. Unfortunately, the funding for this potentially important tool has not been secured so far.

## **Websites**

### AEWA website ([www.unep-aewa.org](http://www.unep-aewa.org))

The AEWA website has continuously developed over the last years. Besides the *News* section, which is updated at least once per week, a number of new pages have been created providing in depth and up-to-date information on ongoing activities, e.g. for the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose and the activities in the framework of the African Initiative. A press and media resources page provides audio-visual materials and links to different AEWA resources that can be used for media purposes. The AEWA website in its current form was developed in 2003/2004 and although it continues to fulfil its basic function, it is starting to become technologically out-dated. The AEWA Secretariat would like to receive the mandate from Parties to start a process of revamping the AEWA website, possibly through the process of developing a future CMS Family Website.

### CMS Family Website Concept

At the special session of the CMS Management Meeting (MM) which took place during an internal CMS Family Retreat in March 2011, it was decided to create a "Website Working Group", initially consisting of staff from CMS and all Bonn-based CMS Agreements including AEWA, to develop a project concept/proposal for a future CMS Family Website. After its creation, the Website WG agreed to follow a full participatory and transparent process in the development of this proposal, i.e. one which would gain from input from all CMS Family staff and also incorporate feedback from the Parties. In August 2011 an internal workshop and brainstorming session on the CMS Family Website was conducted involving CMS and Agreement staff, and an online survey for Parties and the general public was prepared. The results will be used as basis for the development of a concept proposal for a future CMS Family Website, which will be presented at the upcoming CMS COP10 in November 2011 and at the AEWA MOP5 in May 2012.

### TC Workspace (<http://tcworkspace.aewa.info/>)

The AEWA TC Workspace has become a primary online collaboration tool for the AEWA Technical Committee and is being actively used by TC Members and Observers and the AEWA Secretariat to support the ongoing work of the TC, especially between face-to-face meetings. However, the AEWA Secretariat needs to highlight that with the increasing use of and dependency on the TC Workspace the AEWA Secretariat will need additional funding to be able to ensure its reliability through necessary system upgrades and to be able to make requested improvements to it in the coming years.

### World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) website ([www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org))

The centre of the annual WMBD campaign is the WMBD website. Since its development in 2006, the AEWA Secretariat has taken the lead in managing and updating this online resource. Each year a small team of interns, working under the supervision of the Associate Information Officer, helped to develop and customize the WMBD website to fit the annually selected theme. A special WMBD Trailer was also produced and featured on the WMBD 2011 website and a new Interactive Events Map was created and made accessible from the WMBD 2011 website to showcase all registered WMBD events around the world.

### AEWA International SSAP Website for the Lesser White-fronted Goose

Within the framework of the implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose a website including an internal workspace has been developed by the AEWA Secretariat with assistance from an external technical expert. The publicly-accessible website will function as a platform to showcase the international conservation work being coordinated by the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose

Working Group, whilst the internal workspace will be used for communication between Working Group Members and Observers in the inter-sessional periods between Working Group meetings. Although the Content Management System template being used is a new one, the workspace has been modelled after the TC Workspace in terms of the collaboration features it offers. Depending on available funding, the AEWA Secretariat aims to duplicate the developed website and workspace for the other Species Working Groups convened under the Agreement.

#### Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) website ([www.wingsoverwetlands.org](http://www.wingsoverwetlands.org))

In his capacity as Communication Officer for the Wings over Wetlands Project, the AEWA Associate Information Officer developed and maintained the WOW project website for the duration of the project implementation (2006 – 2010). In early 2011 the WOW website was transformed into an “archive” and is being kept accessible for the public as a testimony to the projects implementation. The website is being physically hosted by Wetlands International and the AEWA Secretariat has agreed to cover the small cost associated with the renewal of the website address.

#### AFRING website ([www.afring.org](http://www.afring.org))

The AEWA Associate Information Officer developed a designated website for the African Waterbird Ringing Scheme (AFRING). The website has been handed over to Mr Doug Harebottle at the Avian Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, who has agreed to maintain it.

#### **Posters**

In 2010 and 2011 customized World Migratory Bird Day posters were designed and 2,500 were printed each year and distributed by the Secretariat.

#### **Stickers**

New species stickers were printed in 2011, depicting the following species: Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*), Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*), Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*), Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*), Madagascar Pond-heron (*Ardeola idea*) and Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*).

#### **AEWA Exhibition Stand**

The AEWA Secretariat has developed a new 80 cm x 2m display for use at public events and presentations.

#### **Technical Series**

All the seven International Single Species Action Plans (SSAP) adopted by MOP4 (see the list below) were printed by the Secretariat and also published on the AEWA website:

- Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* (Technical Series No. 14)
- Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (Technical Series No. 34)
- Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* (Technical Series No. 35)
- Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (Technical Series No. 36)
- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (Technical Series No. 37)
- White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi* (Technical Series No. 38)
- Madagascar Pond-Heron *Ardeola idae* (Technical Series No. 39)

<http://www.unep-awa.org/publications/ssap/index.htm>

Moreover, a few guidelines and reports have been published on the AEWA website as electronic versions, including:

- Guidelines on how to avoid, minimize or mitigate impact of infrastructural developments and related disturbance affecting waterbirds (Technical Series No. 26/ Conservation Guidelines No. 11); and
- Guidelines on measures needed to help waterbirds to adapt to climate change (Technical Series No. 27/ AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 12).

[http://www.unep-awa.org/publications/conservation\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.unep-awa.org/publications/conservation_guidelines.htm)

## Other publications

### Phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands: Experiences made and lessons learned by AEWA Range States

This publication is based on a survey, undertaken by the AEWA Secretariat in 2007/2008, among governmental focal points and national hunting organisation in AEWA Range States which have phased out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. The findings of this survey have been summarized in order to guide governments through the process of implementing Paragraph 4.1.4 of the AEWA Action Plan by providing a roadmap built on experiences made and lessons learned by other countries. This publication is part of the AEWA popular series and available as hardcopy and electronic version in English and French.

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/popular\\_series/lead-shot-en.pdf](http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/popular_series/lead-shot-en.pdf)

### AEWA History book

To mark the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWA, the AEWA Secretariat, in close cooperation with the AEWA Honorary Patron Dr. Gerard C. Boere, prepared a publication describing the early development history of the Agreement. This publication covers the period 1985-2000 and looks at the development and implementation of AEWA in the broader context of waterbird and wetland conservation over the last 40-50 years. The publication contains hundreds of historic photos, documents and references which, together with the text, illustrate the evolvement of AEWA into the international treaty it is today. It is a testimony to the collective international efforts and all the processes and different people which played a role in paving the way for the conclusion of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement during its final Negotiation Meeting on 14 - 16 June 1995 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in The Hague. This publication is available as hardcopy and electronic version.

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/books/aewa\\_history\\_book\\_sm.pdf](http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/books/aewa_history_book_sm.pdf)

### Black-tailed Godwit – the journey of a bird under threat

In cooperation with the Belgian wildlife painter Yves Fagniard, the AEWA Secretariat has created a book on the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*). This publication was presented at the AEWA 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium which took place in The Hague, the Netherlands, on 14 to 15 June 2010. It is available in English and French as hardcopy and electronic version.

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/books/btg\\_engl\\_sm.pdf](http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/books/btg_engl_sm.pdf)

### African Initiative leaflet

The AEWA Secretariat has developed an informative leaflet on the African Initiative, which is available as hardcopy and electronic version in English and French.

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/africaninitiative/publication/index.htm>

### How you can support the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement!

The AEWA Secretariat has published a revised version of its fundraising kit “How you can support the implementation of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement”. This bilingual publication (English and French) consists of a kit of 29 leaflets, each presenting a project which was given priority by the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP4, Madagascar, 2008), but for which funds are lacking. The publication is available as hardcopy and electronic version.

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/iip\\_brochure/iip\\_brochure2011.pdf](http://www.unep-aewa.org/publications/iip_brochure/iip_brochure2011.pdf)

### Flyway Conservation at Work

The publication, which is also available for download from the WOW website, gives an overview of the WOW project and the main achievements of this unique flyway initiative carried out in the African-Eurasian region, showcasing the important flyway-scale conservation work and materials developed under the project.

<http://wow.wetlands.org/ABOUTWOW/LATESTNEWS/tabid/125/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2164/Default.aspx>

### Official AEWA documents

The AEWA Agreement Text as well as the Strategic Plan 2009-2017 have been laid out in line with the AEWA corporate house style design and are available in hardcopy and electronic version in English and French.

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/documents/agreement\\_text/agree\\_main.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/documents/agreement_text/agree_main.htm)

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/documents/agreement\\_text/strategic-plan.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/documents/agreement_text/strategic-plan.htm)

### **World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2010 and 2011**

#### **WMBD 2010**

The fifth World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) took place on 8 - 9 May 2010. The central theme "*Save migratory birds in crisis - every species counts!*" aimed to raise awareness about globally threatened migratory birds, with a particular focus on those birds on the very edge of extinction - the Critically Endangered. The WMBD 2010 theme was closely linked to the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), which was declared by the UN General Assembly for the year 2010 to bring greater international attention to the continued loss of biodiversity worldwide. Over 93 different WMBD events in at least 43 countries were registered on the WMBD website in 2010. More than 100 articles referring to WMBD 2010 from media and website sources from around the world were featured right before and over the WMBD weekend. Moreover, since 2010 World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is also engaging social media with dedicated WMBD Facebook and Twitter pages to share latest news and to link people around the world who celebrate WMBD.

#### **WMBD 2011**

WMBD 2011 was celebrated on 14 - 15 May 2011. The theme was: '*Land use changes from a bird's-eye view*' and it highlighted the negative effects human activities are having on migratory birds, their habitats and the planet's natural environment. With 205 events registered in 64 countries worldwide WMBD 2011 broke all records in comparison with previous years and has evidently developed into a highly recognized and popular global campaign.

WMBD is a common CMS-AEWA activity; however the AEWA Secretariat has the lead in the overall coordination of WMBD outreach activities. In 2012 WMBD will coincide with MOP5, and preparing for the latter will require most of the AEWA Secretariat's attention and effort. The AEWA and CMS Secretariat have therefore decided that the CMS Secretariat will take a stronger role in organizing the seventh WMBD campaign. Moreover, the Secretariats are currently considering different options on how to deal with the WMBD preparation in the long term.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE**

Contracting Parties are responsible and involved in the implementation of and compliance with the provisions laid down in the Agreement. Their National Reports provide the necessary information to enable an assessment on progress made in this respect. However, the Agreement Secretariat is partly responsible and also involved in the implementation and/ or compliance of the Agreement. Hereafter you will find information on the role of the Secretariat in this respect.

#### **International Implementation Tasks (IIT)**

The IIT 2009-2016 include 31 projects, of which 12 have - at least partly - been implemented since 2009 (most of them in the framework of the WOW project), including following projects:

##### **SPECIES CONSERVATION**

- Implement existing international single species action plans
- Develop new international single species action plans

##### **HABITAT CONSERVATION**

- Identify all sites of international importance for AEWA species
- Creating an interactive tool that presents information on important sites for migratory waterbirds
- Publish priority areas for better protection

##### **RESEARCH AND MONITORING**

- Survey work in poorly-known areas
- International Waterbird Census – special gap-filling surveys

#### EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

- Improving survey and monitoring capacity for migratory waterbirds
- Regional training programmes in Africa for implementation of the Agreement
- Regional workshops for the promotion of the Agreement
- Communicating the importance of a network of critical sites for migratory waterbirds

#### **Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project**

After four years of successful implementation the WOW Project has come to close at the end of 2010. It has delivered several very valuable outcomes which will support the implementation of AEWA in the years to come, such as the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool and the Flyway Training Kit (FTK).

The CSN Tool is an open-access online information and mapping resource ([www.wingsoverwetlands.org/csntool](http://www.wingsoverwetlands.org/csntool)) customized to support waterbird conservation in the AEWA region. It is designed to help a range of different users, from site managers to national authorities and international organizations, access information on waterbirds and the sites they depend on in Africa and western Eurasia. It is important to note that the AEWA Secretariat has agreed to cover the basic maintenance cost for the CSN Tool (€ 5,000 annually) in order to keep the system operational. The CSN Tool maintenance work is being coordinated by Wetlands International and BirdLife International in cooperation with UNEP-WCMC.

The CSN Tool was recently recognized as one of the best web-based conservation mapping tools. The tool won the first prize of the ESRI/SCGIS International Conservation Mapping Competition in the category “Best Interactive Web Map” on 21 June 2011. ESRI is a major software development and services company providing Geographic Information Software (GIS) and the latest geodatabase management applications which are also being used in the Critical Site Network (CSN) Tool.

The WOW Flyway Training Kit (FTK) was released in 2010 and is available in four languages (English, French, Arabic and Russian). The Flyway Training Kit is a unique resource in flyway-scale conservation and represents an important step towards meeting core strategic objectives of both AEWA and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The training package includes three modules with comprehensive text, case studies and exercises supported by ready-to-use presentations, as well as accompanying CDs with a range of additional material. The kit is designed to assist in targeted trainings that can be customized by topic as they relate to flyway conservation, wetland management and migratory waterbird conservation. Funding permitting, the FTK can be used for trainings conducted in the context of the AEWA African Initiative and should be seen as a unique CEPA tool on the general topic of flyway conservation and AEWA.

Another major outcome of the project was the successful implementation of ten of the eleven demonstration projects.

Last but not least, the project has strengthened the alliance between the four main partner organizations – BirdLife International, Wetlands International, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the AEWA Secretariat, which signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in June 2010 in order to continue the partnership that has been built up during the design and implementation of the WOW project.

#### **The African Initiative to strengthen the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats**

The African Initiative was adopted at MOP4 (Resolution 4.9) and MOP4 agreed to allocate an amount of € 172,500 towards the development of a Plan of Action and other activities until 2012. The Meeting of Parties requested the Secretariat to submit a draft Plan of Action to MOP5 in 2012. In addition some countries promised to look into providing additional support to this initiative and particularly to the recruitment of an African Officer. Meanwhile the Government of France has provided substantial support enabling the Secretariat to recruit Ms. Evelyn Moloko as Coordinator for the African Initiative as of 1 August 2009. Her tasks under this position include the drafting of a Plan of Action for the conservation of

migratory waterbirds and their habitats in Africa (see StC Inf.7.7), fundraising and awareness raising activities, membership development and advisory services to the Parties from the region.

As part of the implementation of the African Initiative, the Secretariat launched the first cycle of the AEWA Small Grant Fund, approved through Resolution 1.7. Funds available in the first cycle amounted to € 70,000 (€ 20,000 from the core budget and € 50,000 from a voluntary contribution from France).

From the 31 project proposals submitted the following four projects received support from the SGF in 2010:

- **Kenya:** Conserving the Madagascar Pond-heron in its non-breeding range – investigating its key sites and habitat requirements in Kenya and raising its profile nationally;
- **Madagascar:** Conservation of migratory waterbird species in Madagascar – improving the knowledge base and status of the Madagascar Pond-heron;
- **Egypt:** Assessment of breeding waterbird populations on ten Red Sea islands; and
- **Ethiopia:** White-winged Flufftail status survey, research and conservation.

Five additional projects from Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda were approved for funding in case more resources become available in the course of the year. Thanks to an additional voluntary contribution received from the Government of Switzerland in early 2011 a 2-year project in Gambia on “Strengthening monitoring of breeding colonies of waterbirds on Bijol Islands” has meanwhile received support under the 2010 Small Grants Fund cycle.

For more information on SGF 2010 please see this link:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news\\_elements/2010/small\\_grants\\_fund\\_programme\\_2010.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2010/small_grants_fund_programme_2010.htm)

The AEWA Secretariat has recently called for project proposals in the context of the second cycle of the Small Grants Fund, and will review the received proposals in the weeks to come. However, unfortunately, funding is limited to the € 20,000 foreseen in the core budget for the 2011 cycle, thus allowing the Secretariat to fund only one project in Africa. It is still hoped that voluntary contributions will be given for the implementation of this activity.

### **Strengthening waterbird and wetland capacities in North Africa (WetCap)**

The WetCap project was launched on 1 March 2009 with the main partners being BirdLife International, SEO (Spanish BirdLife partner), Wetlands International, the Ramsar Convention and AEWA. Its focus was on capacity building for waterbird and wetland conservation in North Africa. In 2008, the main donor, the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), had approved our proposal and promised to contribute up to € 1.6 million to this 3-year project. The project was implemented for one year. Unfortunately, due to a change of priorities within AECID, the funding for the second and third year of implementation was suspended and the continuation of the project is therefore unlikely. Activities successfully implemented under this project during its first year include a Regional workshop on the Critical Sites Network (CSN) tool, which was held in Mehdiya, Morocco on 3-5 December 2009.

### **Coordination and implementation of Single Species Action Plans**

A number of new partnerships have been established in 2010 and 2011 with respect to the coordination of Single Species Action Plans:

#### **Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)**

An MoC has been signed between BirdLife International and the AEWA Secretariat in March 2010 for the conservation of the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*). BirdLife International will provide a part-time Coordinator for the AEWA Northern Bald Ibis International Working Group, convene, organize and service its meetings and also lead on the update and revision of the International Northern Bald Ibis SSAP.

#### **Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) and Madagascar Pond-heron (*Ardeola idae*)**

BirdLife Africa and the AEWA Secretariat have signed an MoC on the conservation of the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*), the White-winged Flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) and the Madagascar Pond-heron

(*Ardeola idae*) in April 2010. BirdLife Africa will provide a part-time Coordinator for the AEWA International Working Groups for these species and convene, organize and service their meetings.

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and the AEWA Secretariat have signed two Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC) for the conservation of the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) in August 2010. The aim of these MoCs is to ensure complete and effective implementation of the SSAPs for both species. The AEWA Secretariat and WWT intend to build on their good collaboration in the past to achieve an improved conservation status for both species. WWT will convene and service the two AEWA Working Groups and will provide a part-time post of Coordinator for each Group.

Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*)

The coordination of the AEWA Sociable Lapwing International Working Group (SLIWG) was handed over to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in April 2011. The RSPB will service and coordinate the SLIWG and provide a part-time post of Coordinator, who will also facilitate the implementation of the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for the Sociable Lapwing. Moreover, RSPB has also been leading on the revision of the current SSAP. The revised plan was extended to cover the species' eastern flyway to the Indian subcontinent (outside of the AEWA area) and will therefore be implemented in the framework of both AEWA and CMS.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

An MoC with the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation on the coordination of the Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the Black-tailed Godwit has been signed in August 2011.

For a complete overview on the progress of the production and coordination of Single Species Action Plans please see document StC7.10. A more detailed account of the work done by the Secretariat on the Lesser White-fronted Goose SSAP is provided below:

Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

The overall coordination for the implementation of the SSAP for the Western Palearctic population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) was placed within the AEWA Secretariat and has, since May 2009, been facilitated by the Coordinator for the LWfG Ms. Nina Mikander. This post is currently sponsored by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment.

The overall implementation approach of the Secretariat is to encourage and assist all key range states to establish national working groups and national action plans for the species. To this aim, the Secretariat convened the AEWA LWfG Working Group as foreseen in the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) in 2009. The first meeting of the group was held in Helsinki on the 30 November and 1 December 2010 and was attended by representatives from 16 of 22 range states as well as four observer organizations (BirdLife International, FACE, Wetlands International and WWT). Meeting participants agreed on Terms of Reference for the Working Group, the procedure and template for national reporting on SSAP implementation and prioritized key conservation activities to be implemented by the end of 2012.

Additional activities undertaken within the framework of the Working Group in 2011 include the development of a website and internal workspace as well as the launch of a new report series for the LWfG highlighting in particular projects implemented under the SSAP.

Efforts to institutionalize LWfG conservation in all the key Range States is a lengthy process, which makes it crucial to simultaneously back this work with concrete conservation measures targeting key threats to the species. Therefore the Secretariat is assisting in the planning of and fundraising for LWfG conservation projects in accordance with the priorities set out in the SSAP. The focus for these concentrate conservation efforts is currently on those range states outside of Europe where the threats to the species are thought to be most severe (i.e. Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan etc.).

Concrete conservation projects facilitated by the Secretariat since 2009 include; a LWfG monitoring mission to the Syrian Arab Republic in February 2010 to identify potential key LWfG wintering sites as well as train local conservationists in identifying LWfG, an ongoing project in the Kumo-Manych Depression in Kalmykia, Russian Federation for the regulation of spring and autumn hunting on waterbirds during spring and autumn migration which has been extended until the beginning of 2012 and an extensive monitoring mission in Kazakhstan in October 2010 followed by a workshop in Kostanay, Kazakhstan facilitated by the AEWA Secretariat with the aim to start the drafting of a national Action Plan for the species.

The Secretariat is also involved in conservation measures along the LWfG European flyway: A new five-year EU LIFE+ project for the LWfG has been approved by the EU Commission and will commence in September 2011. The AEWA Secretariat will participate in the project as a partner and beneficiary.

The AEWA Secretariat also facilitates the work of the Committee for Captive Breeding, Reintroduction and Supplementation of Lesser White-fronted Geese in Fennoscandia (RECAP Committee). The fourth RECAP Committee meeting was held in June 2011 at the UN Campus in Bonn. For more information, please see:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news\\_lwfg/lwfg\\_news.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_lwfg/lwfg_news.htm)

### **Implementation Review Process (IRP)**

MOP4 agreed to establish an implementation review process through Resolution 4.6. The main reason for the Meeting of the Parties to take this decision was the lack of implementation of the Agreement and the increasing number of cases of waterbirds or sites that might get affected by human activities. It was decided that the Standing Committee would undertake this process. This is a great step forward for AEWA and allows the Standing Committee and the Secretariat to make on-the-spot assessment of the impact of activities on waterbirds, or on their sites and habitats.

In late 2009, the first IRP case was launched dealing with the illegal hunting of the Sociable Lapwing in Syria. In the end of February 2010 an AEWA on-the-spot assessment mission took place. The mission report and recommendations were approved by the AEWA Standing Committee in June 2010 and were transmitted to the Syrian authorities for further implementation. The IRP report is available here:

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/activities/irp/index.htm>.

The work on this first IRP case was sponsored through a voluntary contribution of the Government of Germany. A small grant was made available to BirdLife International in the autumn of 2010 to provide assistance to the Syrian government for the implementation of the IRP recommendations.

### **Joint advisory missions**

In August 2009, a joint Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) including the CMS and AEWA Secretariats was undertaken to advise the Government of Mozambique on the conservation and wise use of the Marrromeu Complex Ramsar Site. The RAM report is available here: [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-rams-ram62/main/ramsar/1-31-112%5E24429\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-rams-ram62/main/ramsar/1-31-112%5E24429_4000_0)

In June 2010 the AEWA Secretariat, also representing the CMS Secretariat, took part in a RAM to Congo on advising the Government of Congo on the conservation of the Cayo-Loufoualeba Ramsar Site. The RAM report was approved and is available here: [http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/ra./ram\\_rpt\\_66e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/ra./ram_rpt_66e.pdf)

In October 2010, the AEWA and CMS Secretariats were represented by Dr. Imad Cherkaoui in a RAM to the Embouchure de la Moulouya Ramsar Site in Morocco, which aimed at advising the Government as well as other stakeholders, on the conservation and wise use of the site. The report is under preparation.

### **International reviews**

In accordance with paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5 of the AEWA Action Plan, the Agreement Secretariat, in coordination with the Technical Committee and the Parties, shall prepare in intervals of three to nine years a series of international reviews necessary for the implementation of the Action Plan including:

- a) reports on the status and trends of populations;
- b) gaps in information from surveys;

- c) the networks of sites used by each population, including reviews of the protection status of each site as well as the management measures taken in each case;
- d) pertinent hunting and trade legislation in each country relating to the species listed in Annex 2 to this Agreement;
- e) the stage of preparation and implementation of single species action plans;
- f) re-establishment projects; and
- g) the status of introduced non-native waterbird species and hybrids thereof.

From the above list a, d, e, f and g, as well as a report on the use of non-toxic shot for waterbird hunting were submitted to MOP4. The reports requested under a) and c) are now being prepared for MOP5 (see StC Inf. 7.4) while the report under b) was not commissioned due to lack of funding.

#### **4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Project on “Enhancing the capacity for conservation planning in the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement area”**

Since a significant sum was missing to fully implement all activities planned under the WOW project the focus of the AEWA Secretariat’s fundraising efforts since 2009 has been on finding the funds to fill this gap. A project proposal was developed in close cooperation with Wetlands International in mid-2009 to apply for funding under the European Commission’s Thematic Programme for Environment and sustainable management of Natural Resources, including energy (ENRTP) and a 18-months project containing matching activities with the WOW project was approved and funded under the title “Enhancing the capacity for conservation planning in the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement Area”. The funding received for this project was € 200,000.

#### **5. OTHER ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

##### **AEWA’s 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Agreement celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in The Hague, the Netherlands with a Symposium on 14 - 15 June 2010. The Symposium was hosted by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and was facilitated by Dr. Gerard C. Boere, one of AEWA’s founding fathers. Representatives from over 25 countries and a large number of partner organizations participated in the event, celebrating 15 years of success in waterbird conservation and defining the major challenges that lie ahead, which can only be tackled successfully if all stakeholders join forces. During the two-day Symposium, a number of workshops were held on various issues, such as climate change, land use developments and the sustainable management of migratory birds.

The discussions and outcomes of the workshops and the plenary discussions culminated in a declaration - The Hague Action Statement - which defines the Agreement’s role in the future of international waterbird conservation and identifies the steps to be taken in order to protect migratory waterbirds in the most efficient way; particularly with regard to the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (MOP5) in May 2012. The ‘The Hague Action Statement’ can be downloaded under:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/symposium/docs/the\\_hague\\_action\\_statement.pdf](http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/symposium/docs/the_hague_action_statement.pdf)

##### **6th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee**

The meeting was held in The Hague, the Netherlands on 16 - 17 June 2010, at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Government of the Netherlands. The documentation for the meeting can be found at the URL:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc\\_meetings/stc6docs/stc6.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc6docs/stc6.htm)

The report of the meeting is submitted to StC 7 for adoption as document StC 7.4.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee**

The meeting was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 20-23 April 2009, at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Croatia. The documentation and the report of the meeting can be found at the URL:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/tc\\_meetings/tc9/tc9.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/tc_meetings/tc9/tc9.htm)

### **10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee**

The meeting was held in Naivasha, Kenya, on 12-16 September 2011, at the kind invitation of the Kenya Wildlife Service of the Government of Kenya. The report of the meeting is under preparation and will be posted as soon as finalized at the URL:

[http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/tc\\_meetings/tc10/tc10.htm](http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/tc_meetings/tc10/tc10.htm)

### **Preparations for the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (MOP5)**

Preparations are well underway for the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP5) which will take place from 14 to 18 May 2012 in La Rochelle, France. The Secretariat has been in regular contact with the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing of France, and participated in several meetings of the MOP5 Organizing Committee established by the French Government. In late May 2011, a joint visit to La Rochelle was undertaken by representatives of the AEWA Secretariat and the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing and good progress has been made in terms of logistical preparations. The official meeting logo and slogan have now been agreed by the MOP5 organizing committee. "*Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands*" is the slogan that will promote the next Meeting of the Parties. It will be accompanied by an emblematic logo depicting a heron, which was developed by the Ministry's Communication Unit. Furthermore, the Secretariat finalized the MOP5 provisional agenda which was recently sent out to Contracting Parties.

### **New policy-related developments**

Some policy-related developments are taking place within the AEWA region, which are of potential great interest for the future of the Agreement:

#### **Central Asian Flyway (CAF)**

In early 2008, CMS launched the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) Action Plan. CAF covers 30 range states of which 16 are located within the AEWA Agreement Area. Also half of the populations listed in this Action Plan are already covered by AEWA. The CMS Secretariat has plans to hold an intergovernmental negotiation meeting aimed at clarifying the preferred legal and institutional arrangements for a CMS instrument on this flyway prior to the AEWA MOP5 in La Rochelle, France, May 2012. CMS Parties will be invited to endorse this way forward at the forthcoming CMS COP 10 in November 2011. Provided this idea materializes and depending on the outcome of the negotiation meeting, the AEWA Parties might be requested at MOP5 to decide if they wish to extend the Agreement area and include the CAF region.

#### **Future shape of CMS & Flyway Working Group**

At CMS COP9, which took place in December 2008 in Rome, Italy, it was decided, through Resolution 9.12, to establish an *ad hoc* Working Group on the future shape of CMS. In addition to this working group, COP9 also agreed to establish an open-ended Scientific Council Working Group on flyways. For the future shape of CMS and particularly for the future of AEWA these two working groups are of great importance and therefore the Secretariat has participated in both. Their outcomes will be tabled for discussion at CMS COP10.