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**Report by the Regional Representative for the
Middle East and Northern Africa**

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DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPPEMENT
GENERAL DIRECTION OF FORESTS



STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE NORTH AFRICAN SUBREGION



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Introduction:

This document meets the guidelines for reports submitted by regional members at meetings of the Standing Committee of AEWA.

1 - Number of Parties in the Middle East and North Africa :

The AEWA region in North Africa consists of 05 countries, namely :

- Algeria , Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Regarding the Middle Est :

Lebanon , Jordan and Syria are also Contracting Parties to AEWA.

2 - List of address of national focal points updated (attached)

3 - Active promotion of membership :

The North African countries are all parties to AEWA , no activity aimed at promoting the accession of other countries was made .

4 - Development on the implementation of AEWA in the region from the last meeting of the Parties :

4.1 Monitoring of Threatened Species:

The majority of North African countries monitor migratory birds. In most of these countries, threatened and near-threatened species globally are particularly monitored , as the white-headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) , Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya Duck*) , the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and the Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) .

- In Tunisia, the legal protection of these species (and other water birds) is contained in the annual hunting decree .

- In Algeria and Tunisia, the legal protection of most of the key sites for the White-headed Duck , Ferruginous Duck , Spoonbill and Black-tailed Godwit is effective. This is also the case for the colonies of Northern Bald Ibis in Morocco.

- Algeria hosted an Italian ornithologist team delegated by CMS in 2011 to research the Slender-billed Curlew . Also , visits were organized throughout the Northeast Algeria for two Italian ornithologists from 12 to 17 February 2011 , but the specie has not been found. In addition , the Algerian forest administration has designated representatives to the international working groups for species action plans for the Northern Bald Ibis and Black-tailed Godwit .

- Egypt is a member of the International Working Group of the Black-tailed Godwit .

4.2 - Emergencies affecting waterbirds and / or their habitats :

Tunisia reported mortalities of water related to avian botulism in two wetlands of international importance (National Ichkeul and Sebket Sejoumi) during the fall of 2011 up to 1000 birds dead. A national meeting between several departments of the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment , veterinary services and research institutes and association " Les Amis des Oiseaux " (AAO) , BirdLife in Tunisia , was held in early October 2011 , to arrange for immediate action and an early warning and long-term monitoring system. After heavy rain fell in October 2011 no further mortality was reported .

Tunisia, Libya and Egypt , following the political and security situation in 2011 , habitats and natural resources remain under severe threat from uncontrolled human activities such as poaching, mining, urban development, pollution , etc. . Also, measures are taken to Tunisia to monitor threats and impacts, by raising public awareness .

Eradication or other action on alien species

4.3-Activities:

The introduction of exotic species of waterbirds is generally negligible in the region. However, special attention is paid to the potential presence of the Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* .

4.4 Habitat waterbird inventory, conservation, restoration and rehabilitation

- The " Atlas of wintering water birds in Libya " launched during the MOP 5 in La Rochelle (France) in May 2012, is a publication of a partnership between the Environment General Authority (EGA) Libya and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (UNEP / MAP - RAC / SPA) , in collaboration with a team of international experts (Tunisia , Italy, France , Malta and the United Kingdom) and financial support from several donors .

- Tunisia has made the designation of 15 new Ramsar sites. In addition, management plans have been developed for three wetlands of international importance. The country reports also be engaged in the process of creating a national committee of wetlands with a large participation of institutions and civil society.

- In 2011, Algeria with the appointment of three new wetlands on the Ramsar list : Nechaa Oum Laagareb (729 ha) , Rachgoun Island (66 ha) and Lake Boughzoul (9058 ha) , reached 50 sites with nearly 3 million hectares. The country launched in July 2013 to develop a national strategy and an action plan for the wetlands that will be finalized in 2014 and whose implementation will be scheduled in the next five-year program from 2015 to 2019 .

- Egypt has received a small grant from AEWA to study waterbirds and investigate the islands in the Red Sea that will soon be launched . The country is working with the RAC / SPA and ONCFS International Waterbird Census in mid- winter.

4.5- Monitoring and research on waterbirds and their habitats :

- All countries have provided data on the census of winter water birds (WBC) and the monitoring of waterbird species in IBA .

- The breeding colonies Tern (*Sterna bengalensis*) were monitored in Libya in 2012. A breeding sites (Island Jeliana) was restored in the spring to provide better conditions for the breeding population and thus increase the success of reproduction.

- The continued intensive monitoring of populations of water birds (wintering and breeding) in key selected sites was reported by Tunisia (Cap Bon wetlands , National Park Ichkeul Salines Thyna and areas wet desert in southern Tunisia) . Surveys were conducted on breeding colonies of 3 herons and egrets . Training of trainers is ongoing about waterfowl and census methods for waterbird organized by the AAO association Sfax (Tunisia) in June 2012 with the financial support of Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN) , BirdLife in the Netherlands Netherlands, using the new publication " the identification and counting of waterbirds in Africa: a toolkit for trainers " developed by ONCFS (France) .

- In Algeria, a national bird watchers network was formally established by ministerial order for the monitoring of water birds as indicators of good state of conservation of wetlands . This decree was signed and published in the Official Journal in August 2, 2011 . Similarly, a study on the implementation of AEWA is funded by the Algerian Forestry Administration , under the title " Spatial and temporal study of waterbirds through the International Bird Census from 1999 to 2012. " Under the Small Grants Fund of AEWA Algerian Forestry Administration introduced a project unsuccessful , "Study on the Flamingo in wetlands of the Wilaya of Oum El Bouaghi : movements nesting and migration. "

- In Egypt, the taem responsible for the conduct of monitoring programs of seasonal birds in protected areas is supported by the nature conservation sector .

4.6 -Education and information on waterbirds and their habitats :

An information campaign and awareness about the international Census of waterbirds , was organized by BirdLife partner association " Les Amis des Oiseaux " (AAO) on January 24, 2012, Ariana Tunisia, with the participation of all relevant national stakeholders and international expert team.

Several countries have organized events on waterbirds and wetlands at the World Migratory Bird Day in 2012. Similarly , the World Wetlands Day was celebrated by these countries. In Tunisia, the celebration took place in the future center of wetlands Melah El Ghar , a collaboration between the National Forest Service and the WWF office in Tunis and several national partners. Also in Ghar El Melah , both partners are implementing a local educational program. In addition , the National Forestry Department and WWF Tunisia published in 2012 , a new document on the 35 Ramsar sites. Finally , a national NGO conservation of wetlands was created in 2012.

AAO (Tunisia) and ONCFS (France) together with the publication of an identification of waterbirds wintering in North Africa guide. This pocket guide , which covers seven countries (Mauritania , Morocco , Algeria , Tunisia, Libya , Egypt and Sudan) and 200 species of birds, written in Arabic , available since September 2012 is widely distributed .

In Algeria , a booklet entitled "30 years of application of the Ramsar Convention in Algeria " was launched on the occasion of the World Wetlands Day .

4.7. Cases of threatened waterfowl and their habitats :

A potential threat to migratory waterbirds is emerging in Tunisia , following the launch of activities aimed at improving the use of wind energy.

In most countries , the legislation for the protection of waterbirds and their habitats exists but poor enforcement

undermines conservation efforts. Tunisia, Libya and Egypt , the situation has worsened since the troubles of spring 2011 and control difficulties .

Also , illegal hunting of waterfowl is increasing in the eastern part of Libya and trafficking of birds increases more in Tunisia , including the threatened water birds.

5 - Overview of special events and / or meetings related to AEWA

5.1 - First regional workshop on international waterbird counts (IWC) held in Tunis (Tunisia) in October 2012: The workshop was held on 8 and 9 October 2012 in Tunis. Organized by AAO in a regional support IWC and conservation of Mediterranean wetlands program, initiated by the research center of the Tour du Valat , ONCFS , WI , the French Ministry of ecology and the MAVA Foundation , the workshop was attended by representatives of NGOs , universities and governments of the five north African countries (Morocco , Algeria , Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) .

After a review of IWC made by different countries, participants discussed the capacity of national networks for better performance. Several other topics were discussed such as the sharing and dissemination of data, training of observers and trainers, the need to standardize working methods and data analysis as well as better use of these data for the management and conservation of wetlands. After two days of intense discussions, the participants agreed to take two specific actions for 2013 :

1 - National databases and regional platform :

The GREPOM (Morocco) is currently developing a national database of waterbirds and wetlands of Morocco that could be used by North African countries. The regional program will support its finalization and testing by the AAO . In 2013 , each country will select the database it is best suited among existing tools (base developed by GREPOM , observado.org developed by WI medwaterbirds.net developed the Tour du Valat) . A regional platform will also be set up to facilitate the exchange of data between countries .

- Counting of water birds wintering in January:

Counts in 2013 as part of the IWC will take place in a coordinated manner in the five North African countries . The results will be pooled to achieve a regional analysis. A summary of these counts will be communicated organizations and North African and international institutions.

The organizers and participants hope that the support program will start a true regional program IWC in North Africa with the active participation of all stakeholders . This project was indeed intended to improve the overall quality of monitoring of waterbirds in this region to protect them and their habitats.

Representatives of government agencies, universities and non- governmental organizations (NGOs) in five North African countries (Algeria , Egypt, Libya , Morocco and Tunisia) , as well as representatives of the Research Centre of the Tour du Valat , the National Office and Wildlife (ONCFS) in France and Wetlands International Hunting attended the workshop

2 - Assessment of needs and expectations

The inventory of the IWC in North Africa showed great heterogeneity in the monitoring between countries. To better identify the needs (requirements , equipment needed to achieve the IWC) and expectations (what will be the results of the IWC) of each country on the IWC , an anonymous survey was conducted among the partners present . Each participant was asked to write three needs and expectations of three six different boxes mentioning only the country to highlight the different demands in different countries. The results of this survey will be presented to each country and in North Africa.

Summary of the IWC workshop in North Africa

- Equipment: need for optical equipment (telescopes , binoculars) , identification guide , technical documents (protocol, methodology) , software -based national and regional data (including the online entry) .

- Training: need training on bird identification , counting methods , processing and analyzing data , facilitating a network of observers .

- Database: need a national database with protocols for the sharing and use of data.

- Capacity building at national level need support to carry out regular and systemic IWC with a standardized methodology within the framework of a national strategy , the need for financial support for the coordination of existing network or observers for the establishment of new NGOs in the field of birds (ecology and conservation) .

- Regional cooperation : the need for more exchanges between the countries of North Africa on their different experiences, participatory communication device (website, newsletter, magazine)

Expectations can be grouped into four broad categories :

1 - Products : IWC results should enable the production of 'products' useful for research (research paper) for the management of wetlands and to educate the public (popularized scientific article , document communication and awareness) .

2 - National Strategy IWC : the results of the IWC should allow the establishment of a national strategic action plan for a sustainable and repeatable execution time of IWC . The plan must :

- Involving government, universities and / or NGOs. The plan should identify priority sites and species to study;
- find ways to recruit new volunteers for greater involvement of decision-making bodies (administrations) , the search for new funding.

3 - Conservation: IWC results must be submitted to decision makers for use in the conservation of waterbirds and wetlands (eg designation of Ramsar sites.) To convince them to the conservation of wetlands in priority actions at the political level .

4 - Regional Network : the exchange of information on IWC at regional level should enable a better understanding of the ecology of waterfowl and better consideration of structures carrying the IWC by governments and international NGOs. This regional network should be supported by international organizations , in partnership with the structures realizing the IWC in each country.

5.2 -second international workshop on counts of waterbirds (IWC) , EL kala (Algeria) :

The workshop was held in El Kala (Wilaya of El Tarf , Algeria) from 2 to 6 June 2013 , coupled with the meeting on the implementation of the African initiative " of the Agreement on the Conservation of water Birds in Africa and Eurasia (AEWA) in North Africa .

This workshop was organized by the General Directorate of Forestry , in partnership with El Kala National Park, the AEWA Secretariat , the Tour du Valat , the French Office for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS) with technical and financial support from the french Ministry of Ecology , Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE) and the MAVA Foundation for nature Conservation .

This meeting came within the framework of the Support Programme for International Waterbird Counts (IWC) in the Mediterranean region , which is an essential tool for the application of the Agreement for the Conservation of migratory waterbirds of African - Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands .

In the Mediterranean region, to support IWC Program was initiated in 2012 by the Tour du Valat (ToF) , the French Office for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS) and Wetlands International (WI), with the financial support from the french Ministry of Ecology , Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE) and the MAVA Foundation , at the request of the North African country. It aims to improve the spatial coverage and quality monitoring of waterbirds in this region.

This workshop follows a first regional workshop on the IWC in North Africa, held in October 2012 in Tunis (detailed below) .

5.2.1.- Objectives of the workshop

- Present the recent educational developments in IWC for trainers with the presentation of existing tools (theoretical and practical sessions)
- Keep the meeting of the sub-region " North Africa" for the launch of the Action Plan for Africa AEWA adopted MOP5 (France , 2012) in the framework of the African Initiative and Plan Action 2012-2017 .
- Identify actions to be implemented in North Africa, among those in the Action Plan for Africa AEWA (AHS) , which will be supported by the Support Unit Technique (TDV ONCFS and MDDE - France) .
- Election of the sub-regional focal point AEWA for North Africa, among the NFP / AEWA by them pursuant to resolution 15.9 MOP5.

5.2.2 -Participants:

- Representatives of the North African countries (AEWA focal point and coordinator IWC) : Algeria, Morocco , Tunisia, Libya , Egypt ;
- The focal point of the AEWA Sudan.
- The partners of the Technical Support Unit (TSU) of the African Initiative and support the IWC program: the Tour du Valat , the French Office for Hunting and Wildlife and the Department of French Ecology , Sustainable Development and Energy based in France .
- The Acting Secretary General of the AEWA ;
- the staff of general Management of Forests ;
- the staff of the El Kala National Park ;
- The members of the national Algerian network of observers

- Academics and researchers

5.2.3 - Main topics discussed during the workshop

- Support the IWC in the Mediterranean and network " Waterbirds Mediterranean" program which aims to :
 - ♣ Creating a synergy between existing programs;
 - ♣ The development of tools to facilitate the exchange between partners;
 - ♣ Strengthening the network of waterbirds in the Mediterranean.
- Discussion on the organization of IWC in each country;
- Actions in each country as part of the implementation of AEWA ;
- The existing training tools : Flyway Training Kit , the website medwaterbirds.net , CD and identification and counting , Critical Site Network Tool guide ;
- The strategy of North African (training of trainers , joint training booklet , etc. .) And the creation of new tools ;
- Priority actions by countries from the actions identified in the Action Plan for Africa (AHS) .

The proceedings of the workshop was based on submissions made in the form of PowerPoint presentation followed by discussions .

- 5.2.4 - Priority actions common to the countries of the region

5.2.4.1 Definition - priority actions

After discussion and consultation between the countries of North Africa , there was consensus on the following priority actions:

5.2.4.2 - Installation and implementation of the regional project

It was decided that the Technical Support Unit (TSU) funded by the French Ministry of Ecology and based at the Tour du Valat (Arles, France) is responsible for preparing a draft technical note of the draft to pass focal points for validation. Research funding remained a suspended between the AEWA Secretariat at one hand, and the UST on the other. The first Draft was sent for enrichment and / or adoption by all countries concerned current August 2013 .

According to the representative of the French Ministry of Ecology , research funds should be made by AEWA Secretariat , several funding opportunities were being considered.

For its part, the Secretariat explained that many funding attempts were made but without conclusive results, and made a reference to a project that will be launched soon on sustainable tourism in the migration routes of birds, funded by the German government, and that he would investigate the possibility to benefit from this project.

5.2.4.3 –presentation of Critical Ecosystem Partnership fund (CEPF)

Fund Critical Ecosystem Partnership (CEPF) is working with NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. Its investment, targeting key areas for biodiversity and priority corridors could be a source of funding for a project in North African scale. The disadvantage is that a project and can be submitted only by an NGO.

5.2.4.4 - Election of Sub-Regional Focal Point for North Africa AHS among national focal points

After a coordination meeting which brought together all the countries present in the region, Algeria has been unanimously elected as the sub-regional focal point for North Africa among national focal points, this is in application of resolution of 5.9 MOP5 of AEWA.

♣ In this context, and to enrich the terms of reference established by the AEWA Secretariat , it was suggested the creation of a post of deputy who would second the sub-regional focal point if it is prevented participate in coordination meetings of regional coordinators in Africa ;

♣ The Secretary of AEWA noted that this proposal will be considered but will remain as a suggestion , because it is not provided by MOP5 ,

5.2.4.5 – Field visit

A field trip was held to explore the wetlands of the El Kala National Park , including Lake Tonga and its arboretum , the Mellah lake and Ksar Fatma , an archaeological site where participants were invited to taste the local products

5.2.4.6 – Side meetings

On the sidelines of the workshop, two meetings of the national coordinators of the IWC were held with the purpose to discuss the status of the publication on the IWC in North Africa , to be published in late September. This publication , which Algeria is a senior writer , is entitled : IWC valuation of the whole of North Africa for the

conservation of waterbirds .

5.2.4.7 -Recommendations

After five days of this meeting , the participants made the following recommendations:

- The designation of Algeria as a sub- regional focal point for North represented by Ammar Boumezbeur , national focal point for AEWA Africa;
 - The proposed creation of a post of deputy who coordinates with the sub-regional focal point , if necessary;
 - Preparation of a draft technical note on project priorities identified by the Technical Support Unit (TSU) for submission to donors ;
 - Fundraising by the AEWA Secretariat for launching a North African project ;
 - The study of the possibility of finding a primary funder and other side ;
 - The support and encourage of the IWC support program in the Mediterranean to create synergy between existing networks to work more efficiently.
 - Encouraging the development of a strategy for North African (training of trainers , joint training booklet , etc. .)
- And the creation of new tools.

5.2.4.8 – Mediatization

The event was widely covered by the public and private television, and the spoken and written national press , which has responded positively to our press release.

6 - Overview of the specific issues that may be of interest to the Standing Committee :

No question has been raised by the national focal points that might be of some interest to the Standing Committee of AEWA.

7 - Any other relevant information :

No relevant question is to raise

The regional representative of North Africa and Middle East

Ammar Boumezbeur