



12th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

31 January – 01 February 2017, Paris, France

Report on the activities of the Europe Central Asia Region of the AEWA since the 10th Standing Committee

12th Standing Committee Paris, 31 January – 01 February 2017

This report provides an update of the activities undertaken in the Europe and Central Asia region of the AEWA since the 10th AEWA Standing Committee held in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2015, in particular as regard the admission of new range States, the implementation of the agreement, activities related to the agreement and any other relevant issues. *(Not all the Parties of the region have reported. The information below summarises the reports provided by 12 countries and the EU)*

1) update, where appropriate, of the contact details/of the AEWA National Focal Point (NFP)

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Anja Pel-Roest was replaced by Wilmar Remmelts, Senior Policy Advisor, as of October 2015 both as NFP and for representing the Depository at the standing Committee. Her contacts details are:

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2) any activities undertaken since the 10th Standing Committee to promote accession to the AEWA in your country

N/A

3) developments regarding the implementation of the AEWA since the 10th Standing Committee

Belgium:

- A Species Protection Program for the Corncrake (*Crex crex*) in Flanders was established on 21 December 2015.
- The LIFE Belgian Nature Integrated Project (LIFE 14 IPE BE002 "BNIP") has started. It includes measures to protect the Corncrake (*Crex crex*) and the Eurasian bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*).
- Financial support has been provided to the AEWA International Working Group for the Pink-footed goose for its 2016-18 working period.
- Works have started to enlarge and improve the important wetland "Zwin" at the Dutch-Belgian border.
- Participation in the AEWA White-headed duck international working group meeting, 24-26 October, Madrid.
- Finalization of 600 ha new wetlands along the river Scheldt in the framework of the "Sigmoplan"
- A cooperation agreement among the three Regions and the federal government of Belgium has been developed to ensure an efficient implementation of the European Regulation n° 1143/2014 about invasive alien species according to the competences of the respective authorities. This agreement installs: (i) a Committee, for administrative and political aspects regarding implementation; (ii) a Scientific Council, for scientific support of the Committee; and (iii) a Scientific Secretariat, in support of the Council. Belgium also actively participates in the European scientific forum, committee and working group on invasive alien species.
- As to meet Recommendation n° 149 (2010) of the Bern Convention, and the obligation of the European Regulation n° 1143/2014, a control program on ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) is executed. The current aim is to have the species eradicated by 2020. Being a ruddy duck range state, Belgium also forms part of the AEWA White-headed Duck International Working Group.
- Control of summer geese, mainly greater Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) is taken up by several partners. The aim is to keep the population and its associated damage under control.
- Development of a population model for the resident barnacle geese (*Branta leucopsis*) in Flanders.

Czech Republic:

- Government of the Czech Republic approved the voluntary contribution of 5,000 € per year for AEWA in period 2016-2018.
- An intergovernmental working group to solve illegal poisoning and other types of illegal killing of wild animals has been established at the beginning of year 2016. The WG is led by the Ministry of the Environment and started its work in April 2016. The WG has 12 members, representatives of MoE, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Interior, General directorate of Police of the CR, State Veterinary Administration, Nature Conservation Agency, Czech Inspection of Environment, Ministry of Health, Czech Society for Ornithology and Czech-Moravian Hunting Society. The main goal of WG is preparation of National Strategy of Wild Animals Illegal Killing Prevention (including stop of using lead shoots). The Strategy should be completed at the end of 2017.
- The preparation of a National Raptors Conservation Strategy started in 2016 and will be completed in 2017.
- Methodology of monitoring and data collection to identify important migratory corridors for birds and bats in the Czech Republic has been prepared for MoE by Czech Society for Ornithology in cooperation with Czech Bat Trust.
- Conservation, research and sustainable use of wetlands in the Czech Republic (2014-2017) – activities of the project include also monitoring and evaluation of current state and trends of waterbirds in wetlands of international importance.

France:

- Support to the implementation of the African Initiative:

France carried on providing funding to the Technical Support Unit (TSU) which includes ONCFS, Tour du Valat and Senegal National Parks Directorate. The results of the TSU for technically assisting the African Parties to implement the Plan of Action for Africa adopted at MOP5, were presented at MOP6 and unanimously greeted by the attendees, in particular the African Parties.

Since the last standing Committee, the TSU permanently implemented activities both in North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In North Africa, the TSU:

- organized the last workshop carried out in the framework of the project: « Waterbirds monitoring in North Africa for the preservation of Wetlands », funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), held in Oran, Algeria 27-30 September 2016. This project, for which TSU raised funds in 2013 and which will be completed this year, enabled local NGOs to improve their IWC network, to develop management indicators on pilot sites and to strengthen the awareness of NGOs and local communities regarding wetlands conservation.
- organized the yearly workshop of the Mediterranean Waterbird Network in Arles, 2-4 October 2016. The main goals of this meeting were to finalize a collaborative scientific paper on IWC coordination in North Africa (in press in Biological Conservation) and to complete and sign the convention on data sharing between the countries. Following the update and finalization of the overall IWC database, completed this fall, the network was also able to work on the Medwaterbirds storage and exchange platform (www.medwaterbirds.net) where the data are to be transferred. The network also prepared the next January 2017 IWC, which is supposed to be a "total count". The opportunities of funding of the Mediterranean Waterbird network and its extension to other Mediterranean countries were also discussed.
The achievements of the Mediterranean Waterbird network have been presented at several international events: AEWA MOP6 (Nov. 2015 Germany), 8th International Workshop on the White Spoonbill (Nov 2015, France), European Bird Census Council, EBCC (Sept. 2016, Germany), 14th Panafrican Ornithological Congress (PAOC, Dakar, Senegal, 16-21 October 2016).

In Subsaharan Africa, the TSU:

- attended the 14th Panafrican Ornithological Congress (PAOC), held in Dakar, Senegal, 16-21 October 2016. Two oral communications on the results of the TSU's work in Sudan and Egypt were presented.
- organized along with the AEWA Secretariat and Wetlands International a workshop on IWC Data management aimed at the African anglophones countries. This workshop funded by Switzerland, was held on 21-24 October, back to back with the PAOC. 13 African anglophones AEWA Parties attended the meeting whose goal was to update the list of the counted sites, digitalize their limits and complement the missing data in national IWC databases. The workshop allowed to significantly improve and complement the IWC database both at the regional and international levels.
- carried out a first field mission in Chad in the framework of the forthcoming RESSOURCE project coordinated by FAO. Under the supervision of Direction de la Conservation de la Faune et des Aires Protégées (Ministry of environment), a preliminary assessment of the vast Ramsar site "Plaines d'inondation des Bahr Aouk et Salamat" was initiated. This vast floodplain will be targeted for the first time by ONCFS (with a supporting grant from WI) for the next IWC. Although some conservation issues (intensive agriculture, illegal fishing and invasive plants) were apparent, the overall conservation state of the area seems rather stable. A new AEWA FP for Chad should be appointed in the near future.

Finally, the project called RESSOURCE developed by the TSU in partnership with CIRAD, OMPO and Wetlands International, and submitted by the French Ministry in charge of Environment to the FFEM (French GEF), was accepted for funding on July 4th 2016. This project of an amount of 5 M€ on 4 years will enhance the management of waterbirds in the Sahel and Nile Valley. It will be coordinated by FAO which will also cofund the project. The project which began in Novembre 2016, includes five components: (i) Monitoring of the ressource « Waterbirds »; (ii) Conservation of the ressource « Waterbirds » and integrated management of wetlands; (iii) Knowledge and sustainable use of the ressource « Waterbirds »; (iv) Capacity strengthening and (v) Improvement of legislative and institutional frameworks for the ressource « Waterbirds ».

- Technical cooperation with Russia, Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia:

Through a financial support to the NGO, OMPO, France carried on the development of the project initiated in 2012 aiming at improving knowledge on the conservation status of 5 species of Turdidae (4 thrushes and the Blackbird) and 6 species of Anatidae. In 2015, the project implemented two main activities: (i) the assessment of the current status and trend of breeding populations of Turdidae in Eastern Europe (Saint Petersburg and Karelia regions of Russia, Lithuania) was extended to the Kaliningrad Territory (in Western Russia) and to Ukraine using the same monitoring protocol; the reproductive success was assessed through the monitoring of the age-ratio of the birds caught during

their autumn migration in North Western Russia or hunted in Southern Europe; (ii) the study of the demographic status and reproductive success of 6 Anatidae species in selected sites of Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and Russia, depending of the habitats capacities; this study allowed also to identify several measures for maintaining on the long term ducks populations able to bear a sustainable use.

Some of these last results were presented during the Conference "Waterfowl of Northern Eurasia: study, conservation and sustainable use" held in Salekhard, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (Russia) from 30 November to 5 December 2015. The case of the Common Pochard whose conservation status is unfavorable in Europe, was discussed during a special side-event before being pointed out in the framework of an international resolution approved by the participants: "*In connection with habitat degradation of the Common Pochard caused by the climate change and increasing anthropogenic pressure...*" the Conference recommended the "*support of research on the population dynamics and status of the Common Pochard; actions for managing its population and for restoring its habitats and the preparation of an International Action Plan (AEWA) for the species*".

- Eradication of Ruddy ducks:

The second national plan (2015-2019) to eradicate Ruddy duck in France has been written by ONCFS, approved by the Ministry of Environment and is currently awaiting funding. More than 1,800 birds have been culled since the inception of the first plan in 1997. However, the eradication of the species, forecast for 2015 could not be completed. Nevertheless, the ruddy duck population is globally under control in terms of spatial distribution and number which is estimated about 200 individuals. A national monitoring of wintering birds has been set up. A census of captive birds has been carried out in 2014: between 220 and 350 birds would be held in captivity.

- Launching of an international management plan for the Greylag Goose.

The French Ministry of Environment, together with AEWA Secretariat and OMPO, is willing to coordinate the drafting of the Management Plan for the Greylag Goose under the AEWA. A funding has been secured to that end.

Germany:

- Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

This project under the auspices of the the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) and financed by Germany (and the Netherlands), gives support to monitoring of water birds in Africa and to a respective capacity building cooperation with concerned West African states. In the year 2016 this project published an ornithological field guide called "African East Atlantic Flyway Guide". This Guide is a trilingual publication with English, French and Portuguese text columns and accompanying pictures to facilitate a safe determination of West-African AEWA birds in wetlands linked with the Waddensea by the respective Bird Flyways. Parts of the project ended already in 2016 but other will still go on in 2017 - 2018.

The relevant information can be found on the Webpage of the CWSS under : <http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/management/projects/wadden-sea-flyway-initiative-wsfi>.

The Netherlands:

- International cooperation:
 - In 2016, the 3 Wadden Sea states issued the report on "trends of migratory and wintering waterbirds in the Wadden Sea 1987/88 – 2013/14".
 - Under the umbrella of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, the Netherlands continues with coordinating, supporting and supervising waterbirds counts of tidal areas in West Africa together with other relevant partners. In 2016 counts were held at specific key sites and preparatory work started for the 2nd huge simultaneous count January 2017 at around 30 countries, involving more than 1500 counters. The first similar unique population census on such a huge scale in which almost 15 million individual birds were counted took place in 2014.
 - Within the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, contributions and support was given to several international workshops, mainly in Western Africa.
 - Memorandum of Understanding Park National du Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania) and Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation: In 2016, The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat and the National Park Banc d'Arguin produced a joint World Heritage Flyer to demonstrate the East Atlantic Flyway partnership for the conservation of tidal flat ecosystems. The flyer addresses World

Heritage, biodiversity, management and sustainable use of the unique marine ecosystems. Information about the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative demonstrates the joint efforts and responsibility of migratory waterbird conservation of both World Heritage Sites. The flyer is available in English and French.

- Management of wetlands.
 - The project “Peace for Birds, Space for People”, by Birdlife Netherlands along with other nature and landscape organisations, to improve the conditions for breeding, resting and foraging birds in the Wadden Sea continued in 2016.
 - Based on the successful implementation of this project, a similar project-concept will be initiated in the southwestern Delta area in the Netherlands.
 - To improve the wetland conditions for birds, major restoration works have started on the uninhabited island “Griend” in the Dutch Wadden Sea, to assure enough space and shelter for birds in stormy weather conditions taking into account the effects of a changing climate.
 - In 2016, a Framework Action Plan for Breeding Birds in the Trilateral Wadden Sea was adopted by the 3 states, illustrating the urgency felt to take measures to reverse the persistent declining trends observed. To implement this Action Plan in the Netherlands, the Programme towards a Rich Waddensea (PRW) started a specific breeding-birds action project, and will organise a workshop with all the different site managers in the Wadden Sea to discuss and tune the different actions required. This programme is taken up in the EU Life-IP delta Nature programme the Netherlands successfully submitted.

Switzerland:

After the revision of the Ordonnance which protects the most important wintering places for waterbirds by July 2015, the federal office of Environment (FOEN) wrote a concept to harmonize the signage of all nationally protected areas. The aim is to sensitize the people to vulnerability of these areas and to better manage the visitors by communicating the rules and regulations in these areas more clearly.

Sweden:

- Participation in the development of ISSAP *Numenius arquata*, *Clangula hyemalis*, *Anser fabalis*, *Melanitta fusca*. Continued implementation and revision of the ISSAP Lesser White-fronted Goose, as well as ongoing efforts related to the successful national SSAP, for example a study on genetics in the Swedish population.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of the European Goose Management Platform.
- Since 2015 new national monitoring program for breeding coastal seabirds. Program started partly due to the rapid decline in certain bird populations (i.e. wintering Long-tailed Duck and breeding Common Eider), but including a large part of the seabird species breeding along the coastline.
- Funding of research projects for increasing knowledge of migration patterns and whereabouts during wintering for Taiga Bean goose.
- Funding of research projects especially aimed at increasing knowledge about ducks and geese, in relation to adaptive harvest management.
- LWfG- ongoing efforts related to the successful national SSAP. Comprehensive genetic study.
- Funding of monitoring efforts within the African Initiative.
- National Multi Species AP for *Limosa limosa*, *philomachus pugnax* and *Charadrius alexandrinus* established.
- Continuous efforts to increase protection through international treaties and directives, e.g. establishment of new N2000 sites etc.

United Kingdom:

- National network of Special Protection Areas

- The UK has recently published the third review of its national network of Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive (<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7309>). The review is believed to be the first review of a complete national protected area network assessed against an explicit baseline. Numbers of all qualifying species on SPAs in the 2000s were assessed against their status in the 1990s.
- SPA provision was assessed in detail for 151 species and full details are in the final review published on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's website.
- For non-breeding waterbirds, the network provides targeted conservation measures for 2,488,000 waterbirds, 37% of the national total, as well as for 70% of UK's breeding seabirds (2,471,000 pairs). For some species, the sites hold the whole UK population including breeding species such as the Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* (found on northern Scottish peatlands), and the burrow-nesting seabird Leach's Petrel (which nests on remote Atlantic islands). Very large proportions of non-breeding waterbirds also occur within the site network, including over 80% of the UK's Red Knot *Calidris canutus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, and over 90% of the Svalbard-breeding population of Barnacle Geese which winter on the Solway coast. Some of these sites also hold very significant proportions of species' global populations: Rum and Skomer, off the western coasts of Scotland and Wales respectively, hold 83% of the world's breeding Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*.
- The review assessed how the sites were monitored; most data (85%) came from counts made by volunteers organised through schemes co-funded by government and a range of non-governmental organisations. The review acknowledges the massive voluntary efforts of many tens of thousands of volunteers continue to give their time (and resources) to participate in systematic surveys and monitoring of UK birds, critical information which helps conserve and manage these important sites.
- Comparison with numbers in the 1990s showed that some species have undergone substantial changes in their distributions, leading both to increases and decreases within the site network. One example, the Icelandic-breeding Greylag Goose *Anser anser* – now winters mostly in Orkney in the north of Scotland and has vacated more southerly wintering sites in central and southern Scotland. However, birds such as Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* and Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta*, originally from further south in Europe, are now colonising and spreading north within Great Britain.
- Work is continuing to implement the recommendations made by the Review, and the information in the assessment will be a critical resource to guide conservation actions related to the UK's implementation of AEWA.

4) overview of special activities and/or meetings related to the AEWA

Belgium:

Belgium took part in the following meetings:

- AEWA International Working Group on the Pink-footed goose. A Flemish working group met in 2015 and 2016 and Belgium hosted the meeting of the International Working Group in Ghent in autumn 2015. Belgium acted as a chair of the IWG in 2016 and chaired the meeting of the European Goose Management Platform which incorporates the Pink-footed goose IWG in December 2016 in Sweden.
- Active participation in the kick-off meeting for the establishment of the European Goose Management Platform in Paris, 11-12 May 2015.
- Active participation in the first meeting of the AEWA White-headed Duck International Working Group in Madrid, 24-26 October 2016.

Croatia:

- Every year Croatia celebrates the World Migratory Bird Day. In 2016 this activity was celebrated by many public institutions responsible for management of protected areas, especially the ones where wetlands are predominant target feature. In this regard most active was the public institution of the Vransko Jezero Nature Park that celebrated the World Migratory Bird Day on 19th of May, hosted birdwatching camp in period July-September and celebrated the

Eurobirdwatch Day on the 1st of October. More information can be found on the web page of the respective public institution: <http://www.pp-vransko-jezero.hr/en/>.

- In period 13-15 September 2016, Croatia hosted the Regional workshop for cooperation and implementation of AEWA in the Adriatic Flyway. The workshop was organized by the nature foundation Euronatur and its local partner, the Croatian Society for Birds and Nature Protection, supported by the AEWA Secretariat and hosted by the Croatian Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection. Aim of the workshop was to enhance cooperation and implementation of AEWA for countries situated along the Adriatic Flyway. The workshop was attended by participants from 8 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia), both from governmental organizations (AEWA NFPs and AEWA TFPs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The purpose of the workshop was to bring together different stakeholders in order to exchange information and strengthen future collaboration. More information about the workshop can be found on: <http://www.unep-awa.org/en/news/awa-adriatic-flyway-workshop-samobor-croatia>.

Czech Republic:

- The Ornithological station of Komenského Museum in Prerov organised an exhibition about world of migratory waterbirds in the occasion of 20 years of AEWA.
- A National conference of Czech Society of Ornithology was organised in October 2016.

European Union

- Lead restriction:
 - In December 2015 the Commission requested the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to prepare a so-called REACH Annex XV dossier for a potential restriction of the use of lead in shots in wetlands across the European Union. This will involve a risk assessment, a cost benefit analysis and a socio economic assessment. The need for EU wide restrictions on the use of lead in shots in wetlands is a priority as national legislation has already been enacted by some Member States (or regions in some Member States) further to AEWA to which the EU is a Party.
 - Should the Annex XV dossier demonstrate that action on the use of lead shots in wetlands beyond measures already in place is necessary on a Union-wide basis, ECHA will, within 12 months, communicate its conclusion to the Commission and initiate the restriction process. The Commission would then prepare a draft legal act for the amendment of Annex XVII to REACH (the 'restriction annex'), to be discussed and voted on by EU Member States in the specific REACH Committee, this could be expected sometime in early 2018.
 - In parallel to this, ECHA will also check the use of lead shots in other terrestrial environment, in lead weights and target shooting. This process follows the same steps as described above but will be a longer process than for the lead shots in wetlands.
- European Geese Management Platform:
 - The AEWA Secretariat was invited by the European Commission to present this platform to the Members of the Expert Group on Nature Directives. The meeting took place on 8 November 2016.

France:

- France participated in:
 - MOP6 (Bonn, Germany, 9-14 November 2015). During this MOP, France was nominated representative for Europe and Central Asia and Vice-Chair of the Standing committee;
 - 13th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC13) (14-17 March 2016, Israël). Two researchers from France are appointed as thematic experts for Game Management and Rural Economics;
 - Strategic Plan Working Group on the development of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 (Bonn, Germany, 28-30 June 2016) : 3 persons (Vice-Chair of the standing Committee, the two Technical Committee thematic experts);
 - AEWA White-headed duck international working group meeting, 24-26 October, Madrid.
- France organised together with AEWA Secretariat and OMPO of the Workshop for the Establishment of a European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) under AEWA (Paris, 11-12

May 2016). The meeting was hosted by the French Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea in its headquarters in La Défense. It represents a major turning point in the way AEWA Range States manage their shared migratory waterbirds as considered in the AEWA Resolution 6.4. In this framework, France attended the first meeting of the platform EGMP held in Kristianstad, Sweden, December 14-16 2016.

- France will host the 12th AEWA Standing Committee in Paris on January 31st and February 1st 2017.

Germany:

- Germany supported 2016 the World Migratory Bird Day - as a joint CMS and AEWA event - and its central subject the “prevention of poaching and illegal trade of Migratory Birds“ with more than 30,000 €).
- With its annual German Voluntary contribution to AEWA of 25,600 € Germany supported in 2016:
 - a work shop for the velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) showing a considerable decline within its hibernation area the Baltic sea.
 - the autumn monitoring of Lesser White Fronted Geese and Red breasted geese in Kazakhstan.

Hungary:

- Monitoring activity

There is a long-term on-going monitoring activity in Hungary which has been running in the last two years, too. In 2014 and 2015, the autumn, winter and spring migration of 78 species of waterbirds (Gaviiformes, Podicipediformes, Anseriformes, *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*, *Egretta alba*, *Ardea cinerea*, *Fulica atra*, *Grus grus*, *Haliaetus albicilla*, *Pandion haliaetus*) was monitored at 53 sites between August and April in Hungary.

- Management plan, action plan.
 - Hungary took part in the AEWA Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose, which has not ended yet. Under the latest LIFE project for the species, the Hungarian National Management Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose was approved in 2014, incorporating the principles laid down in the AEWA SSAP.
 - Preparation of a national species action plan for the Eurasian Spoonbill according to the AEWA action plan. In the frame of the Environment and Energy Operational Programme a new national action plan will be made for the Eurasian spoonbill. The expected deadline for the completion is about the end of 2018.
- International projects: Presently, two important international projects are running with the aim of wetland management and restoration.
 - Between 2014 and 2020, Hungarian organisations are the beneficiaries of an international LIFE+ project: “Large scale grazing management of steppe lakes in the Hortobágy”. The main objective of the project is to eliminate the threat factors affecting the steppe lakes and to bring these wetlands to a favourable ecological state. Main activities: to eliminate the manmade canals and dikes; to increase the number of grazing animals on the project areas; to introduce ecologically sustainable high level grazing; to cut down plantation woodlands; to monitor the condition of the steppe lakes.
 - Between 2013 and 2019, the Kiskunság National Park Directorate, Hungary is the beneficiary of an international LIFE+ project: “Restoration of Pannonic sodic wetlands in the Kiskunság”. The project’s overall objective is the restoration of the original water dynamics and natural habitats of a sodic lake and its catchment area, which is one of the most important of such habitats in the Carpathian Basin located in the central part of the Kiskunság. Main activities: to eliminate and fill the man-made canals and ditches; to reduce overgrown vegetation; to increase the number of grazing animals; to establish or renovate the infrastructural background of livestock keeping; to restore arable lands to grassland; to eliminate the stands of non-indigenous and invasive plants.

The Netherlands:

- The Netherlands hosted the Arctic-Migratory Birds Initiative (CAFF-AMBI) implementation meeting in Texel in April 2016 and contributed to the main priority of the African Eurasian Flyway to help de World Heritage Proces in the Bijagos.

- In 2016, the yearly Wadden Sea Day, organised by the trilateral Wadden Sea secretariat of the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany (CWSS), together with the National Park Wadden Sea Lower Saxony (Germany), was dedicated to the topic of declining migratory and breeding birds in the Wadden Sea.
- A workshop on the AEWA Action Plan for the Black Tailed Godwit was held in the Hague for the region of Western Europe.

Norway:

- Norway has recently changed its hunting tables which now comply with the changes of the listings of AEWA. Due to the time needed to change hunting tables, they can only be revised every 5 years.
- Norway hosted the third meeting of the international working group for the Lesser white-fronted goose in April 2016 invited by the Norwegian Environment Agency (see <http://lesserwhitefrontedgoose.aewa.info/> and <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-lesser-white-fronted-goose-working-group-meets-trondheim>). The meeting was well attended, and for the first time also included colleagues from Japan and China. The meeting concluded on the process to revise the present ISSAP, as well as agreeing on closer collaboration with colleagues in the eastern flyway. Norway is committed to continue funding a full time officer at the AEWA Secretariat and will support continuation of any potential EU Life/program as well as activities in other countries along the flyways. In relation to this Norway gave a substantial donation to Greece in 2016 for the continued management of LWfG and its wintering sites.
- Norway attended:
 - the first meeting of the relevant parties to the European Goose Management Platform which took place in Paris May 2016 (see <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/next-steps-agreed-establishment-european-goose-management-platform-under-aewa>). Norway contributed with the basic funding to have the platform up and running as we regard this as an important initiative. It builds on the experience with the adaptive harvest management plan for the Svalbard pink-footed goose population (see <http://pinkfootedgoose.aewa.info/>). The new EGMP will cover this plan, as well as expanding to include grey-lag goose, barnacle goose and the taiga population of the bean goose.
 - the first meeting of the platform EGMP held in Kristianstad, Sweden, December 14-16 2016. Norway is committed to contribute financially to AEWA as Secretariat of this platform in the coming years.

Switzerland:

- Switzerland supported the AEWA African Initiative by funding an international Waterbird Data Management Workshop in October in Dakar, Senegal, immediately following the 14th Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC 14) which also took place in Dakar. The aim of the workshop was to improve the capacity in the anglophone AEWA Contracting Parties in Africa to manage waterbird monitoring data collected in the framework of the International Waterbird Census (IWC), as well as to cleanse and fill in gaps in waterbird and site-related data currently available.
- Switzerland further supported a multi-stakeholder consultation workshop in Yaoundé in December 2016 being co-organized by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) of Cameroon and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to re-energizing the process of Cameroons accession to AEWA with a workshop taking place in Yaoundé from 7 – 8 December 2016

Sweden:

- Hosted the first meeting of the EGMP IWG in Dec 2016.
- Attended meetings on LWfG and Long-tailed duck

Ukraine:

- Every year Ukraine celebrates the World Migratory Bird Day. Following the letter of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine the administrations of the regions and protected areas arrange various events devoted to WMBD.
- There is on-going work on harmonization of the national legislation to the Directive 2009/147/EC

of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (Bird Directive) and the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitat Directive).

- Three regional seminars had been convened in 2016 aimed at raising of awareness on the Bird and Habitat Directive and incorporation of the elements of the both Directives in nature conservation activities.
- Workshop “Implementation of Birds Directive”/ XI conference of West-Ukrainian Ornithological Society took place in Skole, Lviv oblast, Ukraine, October 19–21, 2016. More information is here: <https://goo.gl/4jR1rn>.
- 271 Emerald Network sites in Ukraine had been adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Conventions at its 36th meeting (Strasbourg, France, 15–18 November 2016). More information is here <https://goo.gl/APMa4R>. A lot of Emerald Network sites is important for waterbirds.
- Representatives of Ukraine took part in:
 - 13th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee (Israel, 14–17 March 2016);
 - 3rd Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group (Trondheim, Norway, 12–14 April 2016);
 - 1st Meeting of the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group (Kristianstad, Sweden, 14–16 December 2016).

5) any other relevant information.

European Union:

- Fitness Check of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives.

The Fitness Check evaluation has confirmed that the Birds and Habitats Directives are fit for purpose: they are the cornerstone of Europe's biodiversity policy and provide essential benefits to nature as well as to people and the economy, a key factor that is recognized in this evaluation. Based on the findings of the Fitness Check, the Commission has decided to develop an Action Plan to improve the implementation of the Directives and to address the identified shortcomings, including those deriving from inefficient implementation approaches. Smarter implementation of the rules is necessary to meet EU conservation objectives, maintain Europe's high environmental standards and offer further value to people and the economy.

The Commission published the Fitness Check results on 16 December 2016 (Commission Staff Working Document on Fitness of the EU Nature Legislation).

See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/index_en.htm

- Ruddy duck,

Oxyura jamaicensis has been included on the list of invasive alien species of Union concern (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 date 13 July 2016). This means that since 3 August 2016 this species cannot be brought into the European Union, kept, bred, transported, placed on the market, used, permitted to reproduce or released. Newly establishing populations will need to be rapidly eradicated, and established populations will need to be managed.

- Bycatch of sea birds

The new EU Multiannual Programme for data collection in fisheries and aquaculture, established by Commission implementing Decision EU 2016/1251, for the first time puts an obligation as from 1 January 2017 to Member States to collect data on incidental catch of species protected under EU nature legislation (birds, mammals and reptiles) and on the impact of fisheries on protected habitats.

For example data requirements under Chapter III, section 3 include:

Data to assess the impact of Union fisheries on marine ecosystems in Union waters and outside Union waters. Those data shall consist of the following:

(a) For all types of fisheries, incidental by-catch of all birds, mammals and reptiles and fish protected under Union legislation and international agreements, including the species listed in Table 1D, including absence in the catch, during scientific observer trips on fishing ships or by the fishers themselves through logbooks. Where data collected during observer trips are not considered to provide sufficient data on incidental by-catch for end-user needs, other methodologies, shall be implemented by Member States. The selection of these methodologies shall be coordinated at marine region level and be based on end-user needs.

Furthermore, the Commission proposals for Technical Measures and for Data Collection in fisheries provide inter alia for measures aiming at reducing or eliminating the by-catch of protected species including seabirds. These proposals are currently in negotiation according to Co-decision rules.

- Illegal killing of birds.

The first meeting of the intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, co-ordinated by CMS, took place in Egypt in July 2016. This Task Force brings together eight Mediterranean EU Member States and other Mediterranean countries and it has an agreed ambitious Programme of Work until 2020. The Commission is involved in this Task Force including providing financing for three years.

France:

- Hunting moratoria.

The impact on the birds' populations of the two moratoria on the hunting of the Eurasian Curlew and the Black-tailed Godwit which are running up to July 30th 2018 is monitored through the use of several indicators up to their end as recommended by ONCFS. A task force « Waders » made of various stakeholders: hunters (FNC, ANCGE), conservation NGO (LPO, FNE), public agencies (MNHN, ONCFS) and the Ministry of Environment, Energy and the Sea has been set up to provide advices in the implementation of this monitoring.

The on going national management plan (2015-2020) for the Black-Tailed Godwit is focused on the breeding population. It is led by a Hunters' federation in association with several stakeholders under the supervision of a Regional Directorate for Environment.

A national management plan for the Eurasian Curlew (2014-2018) has been drafted by ONCFS, approved and is going to be implemented under the supervision of a Regional Directorate for Environment.

- Accession of new Parties to AEWA:

OMPO which is involved in the development of AEWA from the very beginning, is actively working for the enlargement of its area of application. Thus, OMPO is involved in the accession process to the Agreement of several East European non-Parties states with which the NGO has developed a long term scientific cooperation. Its technical and financial support so facilitated the accession of the Republic of Belarus to AEWA on 1st April 2016.

Germany:

- Junior Professional official (PO) support for Bird conservation issues:

During the CMS CoP 2014 in Quito the contracting parties adopted resolutions dedicated to Birds Conservation, in particular: Res. 11.15 Preventing Poisoning of migratory birds or Res. 11.16 "Prevention of illegal killing, taking and Trade of Migratory Birds. Since 1.9.2016 a German JPO Tilman Schneider - supports the CMS Bird Team to reach a better implementation of these resolutions, which will be helpful for AEWA interests too. This P2-post will be offered by Germany for in principle 2 years.

The Netherlands:

New policy strategy: A New Agri-Environmental Management system is operational since January 2016 with a special attention to all conditions necessary to improve the status of the meadowbirds among which the Black Tailed Godwit. The management is now carried out by Agrarian Collectives under the responsibility of the provinces. The State is responsible for the system as a whole.

Ukraine:

There had been some publications issued during 2016 and related to waterbirds:

- Bulletin ROM: Results of the regional ornithological monitoring. – Issue 10. South-Eastern Europe. August 2015. – 2016. – 60 p.
- Chtrnichko I.I. Importance of the Azov-Black Sea coast of Ukraine in supporting the structure of transcontinental flyways of waders in Eastern Europe. 2016.

- Chernichko I.I., Kostiushyn V.A., Vinokurova S.V. Importance of Utliuiskiy Liman for the protection of waterbirds in the Azov-Black Sea Region during autumn migration. *Vestnik zoologii*, 50(6), 2016.
