



12th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

31 January – 01 February 2017, Paris, France

UPDATE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED FOR PROLONGATION, REVISION AND RETIREMENT OF AEWA INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS

Introduction

Recognizing the need for a process by which AEWA International Single Species Action Plans are assessed at the end of their tenure, the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties adopted a procedure for the revision and possible retirement of Action Plans (AEWA Doc. MOP6.33 and Resolution 6.8 Annex 2). MOP6 further instructed the Technical Committee to continue the monitoring of International Single Species Action Plans and to present proposals for their revision or retirement to each Session of the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate.

The AEWA Technical Committee has subsequently started an assessment of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans which have either already reached the end of their foreseen tenure or which will reach the end of their validity by MOP7 in 2018, with the aim to make recommendations to MOP7 with regard to how to go forward with these Plans. An update on progress made thus far, including preliminary recommendations, are summarised in the document below.

Approval by the Standing Committee of the suggested way forward for the various Action Plans is needed on an interim basis in advance of the next Session of the Meeting of the Parties in order for the Secretariat to be able to inform the work of the various AEWA Species Working and Expert Groups as well as the wider conservation network.

It is therefore suggested that the final recommendations be circulated to the Standing Committee for approval inter-sessionally within the first half of 2017, following concluding consultations within the Technical Committee.

Action Requested from the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is requested to take note of the progress made regarding the assessment of the prolongation, revision and retirement of select AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, including the preliminary recommendations of the Technical Committee.

In addition, the Standing Committee is requested to take a decision to review and approve the recommended treatment of the select AEWA International Single Species Action Plans inter-sessionally, via correspondence, on a temporary basis, subject to final approval by the Meeting of the Parties.

UPDATE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED FOR PROLONGATION, REVISION AND RETIREMENT OF AEWA INTERNATIONAL SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLANS

Prepared by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat on behalf of the Technical Committee

Introduction

Prior to the 6th Meeting of the AEWA Parties, the action-planning process under AEWA did not foresee a procedure for the retirement of Action Plans from implementation by Parties. The changed status of species populations and/or the successful implementation of Action Plans may, however, warrant the retirement of selected Plans.

Recognizing the need for a process by which AEWA International Single Species Action Plans are assessed at the end of their tenure, the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties adopted a procedure for the revision and possible retirement of Action Plans (AEWA Doc. MOP6.33 and Resolution 6.8 Annex 2). MOP6 further instructed the Technical Committee to continue the monitoring of International Single Species Action Plans and to present proposals for their revision or retirement to each Session of the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate.

The AEWA Technical Committee has subsequently started an assessment of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans which have either already reached the end of their foreseen tenure or which are reaching the end of their validity by MOP7 in 2018, with the aim to make recommendations to MOP7 with regard to how these Plans should be dealt with going forward.

Deliberations within the Technical Committee and with various stakeholders are still ongoing, but an initial overview including recommendations is presented below. A final version is expected to be presented to the AEWA Standing Committee for preliminary approval during the first half of 2017, pending final confirmation by the next Session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2018.

Initial assessment

A first assessment was submitted for discussion and decision to the 13th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee, which took place on the 14-17 March 2016 in Israel. The Plans were assessed for the need for revision or retirement using the process adopted through Resolution 6.8 at the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties in November 2015.

Following the adopted procedure, for species/populations which still rank high on the Technical Committee priority list for action planning when re-evaluated, a revision of the Action Plan was considered. If the re-assessment determined that the species/population was no longer a priority for an International Single Species Action Plan, the Technical Committee was requested to consider suggesting the retirement of the Plan in question. Following a decision of the Meeting of the Parties, retired plans would be removed from the list of Action Plans to be implemented by Parties under the Agreement. Species for which Action Plans are retired will fall back into the prioritization list of the Technical Committee and will be assessed for action-planning after each Meeting of the Parties.

The discussions which ensued within the Technical Committee highlighted the need for a third option in the treatment of Action Plans at the end of their tenure in addition to their revision or retirement, namely the prolongation of the validity of Action Plans in their original adopted form. The Technical Committee concluded that many Action Plans remain completely valid in terms of their threat assessments, overall

objectives and goals as well as following priority results and actions. Thus, rather than focusing scarce resources of Contracting Parties, stakeholders and the AEWA Secretariat on the potentially costly and time intensive revision of Action Plans, it was generally agreed that the focus should rather be on encouraging the implementation of these existing Plans.

Prolongations of existing Action Plans, which have reached the end of their tenure, could be issued for ten years as a general rule, with the possibility of exceptions on a species basis where appropriate and with the caveat that emergency reviews of any of these ISSAPs shall, of course, be undertaken if there are any sudden major changes liable to affect any of the species/populations in question.

In the case of such extensions, the Meeting of the Parties would be requested to confirm that the Action Plans in question remain valid and open for implementation by the Contracting Parties. This suggested third option for the treatment of outgoing Action Plans will require a slight amendment of the adopted process for the revision and retirement of AEWA Action Plans at the next Session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Increase implementation of revised and prolonged Action Plans

Both for Action Plans where a revision is currently being undertaken as for which an extension of the validity is being recommended, measures are urgently needed to increase implementation.

During the discussions within the Technical Committee it has been suggested that some of the Action Plans which are being prolonged may benefit from the production of shorter conservation brief highlighting in particular any potential new scientific information and/or threats that may not have been captured in the original Plan. Such updated conservation advice could potentially be used to re-engage Contracting Parties and stakeholders to implement the Action Plans in question. This may in particular be useful for Action Plans for which no international coordination mechanism exists, or where the established mechanism has not been active. Action Plans with active AEWA International Species Working or Expert Groups will likely not be in need of such additional conservation briefs, as the status of the species/populations as well as the implementation progress of the priority conservation activities is monitored regularly.

In addition, the possibility to establish international coordination mechanisms (either AEWA International Species Working or Expert Groups) for prolonged Action Plans should be considered, in order to facilitate their implementation. For those Plans where such mechanisms have been convened by the AEWA Secretariat, but where they are currently inactive, increased efforts are needed to reactive these coordination mechanisms to increase implementation.

Preliminary recommendations:

- **Retire the AEWA/CMS/EU ISSAP for the Corncrake *Crex crex*, the AEWA ISSAP for the Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* as well as the AEWA/Bern Convention ISSAP for the Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* as the respective Action Plan goals have been achieved and the populations are increasing;**
- Apart from the two ISSAPs for which revision processes are already ongoing (Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* and White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*), **it is not recommended to undertake a revision of any additional ISSAPs at this stage.**
- **Extend the validity of the following ISSAPs for another 10 years (until 2028)** as the main threats as well as the corresponding goals, results and actions outlined in the respective ISSAPs remain valid and the species/populations in question will still benefit from the existence of an international flyway conservation framework:

- Great Snipe *Gallinago media*
- Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
- Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*
- Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*¹
- Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*
- White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresi*
- Madagascar Pond Heron *Ardeola idae*

In order to increase much needed implementation of these Plans following the prolongation of their validity, specific recommendations for next steps with regard to each of the ISSAPs are outlined in the table in Annex I.

As is the case for all AEWA International Single Species Action Plans, emergency reviews of any of these ISSAPs shall, of course, be undertaken if there are any sudden major changes liable to affect any of the species/populations in question.

¹ To be re-assessed by the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group in 2018 to take into account possible changes with regard to hunting regulations in France.

Annex I: AEWA International Single Species Action Plans considered for prolongation, revision or retirement

AEWA ISSAP	Adopted	Revision foreseen	IWG/IEG in place	IUCN status	Status of populations under AEWA	Threats and subsequent results & activities in ISSAP wrong/inadequate	Species trend*	Notes	Suggested TC recommendation and next steps
Great Snipe (<i>Gallinago media</i>)	2002	2005	-	NT	Scandinavia/ West Africa A 2	NO	Stable		Prolong - Consider issuing short updated conservation advice – possibly with focus on declining population; - Consider establishing AEWA Working or Expert Group.
					Western Siberia & NE Europe A 4		DEC?		
Black-winged Pratincole (<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>)	2002	2005	-	NT	SE Europe and Western Asia/ Southern Africa A 4	-	INC	Action Plan goals achieved	Retire
White-headed Duck (<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>)	2005	2015	Yes	EN	West Med. A 1a 1b 1c	-	Sta/INC?	Revision is being undertaken under LIFE EuroSAP project (adoption MOP7); IWG has been convened	Revision ongoing
					Algeria & Tunisia A 1a 1b 1c		INC		
					East Med., Turkey etc. A 1a 1b 1c		DEC		
Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>)	2005	2015	-	LC	Europe & Western Asia etc. C 1	-	FLU	Action Plan goals achieved	Retire
Ferruginous Duck (<i>Aythya nyroca</i>)	2005	2015	-	NT	West Med./North & West Africa – A 1a 1c	NO	Unknown		Prolong - Consider issuing short updated conservation advice; - Consider establishing AEWA Working or Expert Group.
					Eastern Europe/ E Med. & Sahelian Africa A 1a 4		INC		
					Western Asia/ SW Asia, NE Africa – A 1a 3c		Unknown		
Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)	2005	2015	-	LC	Canada, Greenland/ Ireland	-	INC	Action Plan goals achieved	Retire

					A 3a				
Lesser White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser erythropus</i>)	2008	2013	Yes	VU	NE Europe, Siberia etc. A 1a 1b 2	-	Stable?	Revision is being undertaken under the AEWA LWfG IWG	Revision ongoing
					Fennoscandian – A 1a 1b 1c		INC		
Lesser Flamingo (<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>)	2008	2018	Yes	NT	West Africa A 2	NO	INC	IWG established, but no coordination in place due to lack of funds.	Prolong - Increase efforts to reactivate AEWA IWG; - Fundraising needed for coordination and implementation of urgent actions.
					Eastern Africa – A4		Stable/INC?		
					Southern Africa – A 3a		DEC		
Eurasian Spoonbill (<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>)	2008	2018	Yes	LC	<i>Platalea l. leucorodia</i> (3 sub-species) A 2	NO	Unknown Stable DEC	IEG is active, activities are clear – no conservation note needed.	Prolong
					<i>Platalea l. balsaci</i> A 1c		DEC		
					<i>Platalea l. archeri</i> A 1c		DEC		
Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)	2008	2018	Yes	NT	Western Europe etc. A 4	NO	DEC	Possible ISSAP revision to be reviewed by IWG in 2018. IWG is active, activities are clear – no conservation note needed.	Prolong
					Eastern Europe etc. A 3c				
					West-central Asia A 4				
					<i>Limosa islandica</i> A 4				
Maccoa Duck (<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>)	2008	2018	No	NT	Eastern African A 1c	NO	DEC		Prolong - Consider issuing short updated conservation advice; - Consider establishing AEWA Working or Expert Group.
					Southern African A 1c				
White-winged Flufftail (<i>Sarothrura ayresi</i>)	2008	2018	Yes	CR	Ethiopia A 1a 1b 1c	NO	Unknown	IWG is active, activities are clear – no conservation note needed.	Prolong
					Southern Africa A 1a 1b 1c				
Madagascar Pond Heron (<i>Ardeola idae</i>)	2008	2018	Yes	EN	Madagascar & Aldabra/Central & Eastern Africa A 1a 1b 1c	NO	DEC	IWG established, but no coordination in place due to lack of funds.	Prolong - Increase efforts to reactivate AEWA IWG; - Fundraising needed for coordination and implementation of urgent actions.

*CSR6