



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



**7<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

4-8 December 2018, Durban, South Africa

*“Beyond 2020: Shaping flyway conservation for the future”*

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RESOLUTION 7.7

**STRENGTHENING MONITORING OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS**

*Recalling* Resolution 6.3 “*Strengthening monitoring of migratory waterbirds*”, and *further recalling* Resolution 5.2 “*Addressing gaps in knowledge of and conservation action for waterbird populations and sites important for them*” and Resolution 5.22 “*Establishing a long-term basic structural funding regime for the International Waterbird Census in the African-Eurasian region*”,

*Taking note* of the Report on the *Development of Waterbird Monitoring along the African-Eurasian Flyways* and the progress made towards achieving Targets 3.1. of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2017 with respect to waterbird monitoring data gathering and *being aware* that sustainable funding is yet to be secured (document AEWA/MOP 7.31 Rev. 1),

*Gratefully acknowledging* the contributions to the objectives of AEWA with respect to developing waterbird monitoring, made by Contracting Parties, international donors, national and international non-governmental organisations, particularly through the AEWA African Initiative, the *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative*, the *Conserving Migratory Waterbirds in West Africa* project, the *Mediterranean Waterbird Monitoring* project, the *Strengthening Waterbird Monitoring in the African-Eurasian Flyway* project, the *Adriatic Flyway Initiative*, the *Migratory Soaring Birds* project, the *Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC)* project as part of South Africa’s commitment to international waterbird conservation and the *RESSOURCE* project as examples of strategic regional initiatives for the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats,

*Welcoming* the support of the Environment and Protected Areas Authority of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, to the development of the Strategy for monitoring coastal waterbird populations and their habitats on the Arabian Peninsula in response to CMS Resolution 12.25 on “*Promoting conservation of critical intertidal and other coastal habitats for migratory species*” and launched at the Ramsar COP 13 in Dubai, and the active engagement of regional stakeholders in its implementation,

*Taking full account* of document AEWA/MOP 7.14 “*Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area - 7<sup>th</sup> edition*” (aka CSR7),

*Noting* that the preliminary “*Report on the Site Network for Waterbirds in the Agreement Area - 1st edition*” (document AEWA/MOP 5.15) was not revised and finalised during the last two triennia due to lack of funding,

*Welcoming* the revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines on Waterbird Monitoring (document AEWA/MOP 7.35) adopted through Resolution 7.8,

*Welcoming* the progress with the coordination and reporting from the International Waterbird Census (document AEWA/MOP 7.14) and *recognizing* the need for continued support for the scheme both at national and international level,

*Being aware* that further improvement of the knowledge of population sizes, with regard to quantity and quality, is primarily limited by the lack of adequate national and international monitoring schemes focusing on breeding birds in Africa and Central & South-west Asia,

*Acknowledging* the major contributions of the EU Birds Directive Article 12 reporting process and the European Red List of Birds to the last two editions of the AEWA Conservation Status Report,

*Welcoming* the progress with the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Breeding Bird Atlas coordinated by the European Bird Census Council and *appreciating* the improvements in population size estimates and range change estimates this may bring,

*Acknowledging* shared interest in water- and seabird populations covered by status assessment under OSPAR, HELCOM and CAFF,

*Further acknowledging* the contribution of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern African Bird Atlas project to the status assessment of several AEWA populations,

*Acknowledging* that in CSR7, the increase of populations whose status is assessed on the basis of regular monitoring data has increased from 102 to 221, i.e. by 116% compared to CSR4, and thus exceeds the Strategic Plan target of 50%, but still represents only 40% of the populations listed in Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan,

*Concerned* that only one of the eight status-related targets of the Strategic Plan have been reached so far and, in the case of six of the eight targets, the situation has worsened (document AEWA/MOP 7.10),

*Acknowledging* the usefulness of the Critical Site Network Tool for a number of international and national processes under the Agreement *and grateful* for its technical redevelopment under the Climate Resilient Flyways project, *recognizing* its potential to facilitate the monitoring of Objective 3 of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027, *while recognising* that adequate monitoring schemes are essential to ensure that the Tool contains information that is adequate to support the management of the site network,

*Recognising* that other MEAs, particularly the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species, as well as the EU Birds Directive, require regular waterbird monitoring data for their operations, such as Ramsar criteria 5 and 6 for the designation of wetlands of international importance whose applicability is linked to the Waterbird Population Estimates,

*Noting* the conclusions and recommendations of the Standing Committee *Final Report on the implementation of the AEWA Strategic Plan 2009-2018* to MOP7 (document AEWA/MOP 7.10),

*Further noting* the relevant targets and activities of the *AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027* and of the *Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027*,

*Being aware* that the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is represented in the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europe.wetlands.org/our-network/waterbird-monitoring-partnership/>

*Welcoming* the establishment of the Waterbird Fund<sup>2</sup> and *thanking* the Government of Switzerland and other contributors for their donations to the Fund so far,

*The Meeting of the Parties:*

1. *Welcomes* the progress made by the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership and *encourages* the Partnership to continue its work;
2. *Strongly urges* Parties and other donors to regularly contribute to the Waterbird Fund or to other existing international flyway monitoring funding mechanisms;
3. *Reiterates* operative paragraphs 4 - 9 of Resolution 6.3;
4. *Urges* Range States to develop and maintain adequate national monitoring schemes following the principles presented in the revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines on waterbird monitoring and its annexes including the recommended seasons and monitoring methods both for breeding and non-breeding waterbirds so as to identify and monitor international and national important sites, contribute to the production of flyway-level population size and trend estimates for populations listed on Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan;
5. *Encourages* Parties to support research that can inform and improve our understanding of drivers of population changes, with particular focus on the long-term and rapid short-term declines;
6. *Welcomes* the launch of the African Bird Atlas initiative and *urges* Parties and other organisations to join and support the initiative;
7. *Invites* the relevant organisations to upgrade the international coordination of the monitoring of the relevant AEWA populations during the breeding season, with particular attention to colonial breeding species and to engage with the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership;
8. *Urges* Contracting Parties and organisations to provide financial support for the identification of priorities for the systematic development of waterbird monitoring and for the population and site monitoring related activities identified in the *AEWA Strategic Plan 2019-2027* and the *Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027*;
9. *Invites* the Technical Committee and the Secretariat to review the national reporting format, in consultation with the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership;
10. *Welcomes* the update of the 1% thresholds for waterbird populations listed on Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan (available on the Waterbird Population Estimates web portal<sup>3</sup> and in Annex 1 of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the AEWA Conservation Status Report) and encourages Parties to use these thresholds when identifying internationally important sites;
11. *Invites* the Technical Committee and the Secretariat to work with the Ramsar Convention and its regional initiatives, the European Commission as well as CAFF-AMBI, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative), OSPAR, HELCOM and other relevant regional MEAs to identify possible synergies with respect to waterbird population estimates and to waterbird monitoring and reporting.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://waterbird.fund>

<sup>3</sup> <http://wpe.wetlands.org/>