



AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS



7th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

4-8 December 2018, Durban, South Africa

“Beyond 2020: Shaping flyway conservation for the future”

RESOLUTION 7.4

**ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS OF DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION OF
TERMS USED IN THE CONTEXT OF TABLE 1 OF THE AEWA ANNEX 3**

Recalling Resolutions 3.3 and 5.7 that adopted guidance on the interpretation of the term “*significant long-term decline*” in the context of Table 1 of the AEWA Action Plan,

Recognising the benefits of explicitly making the difference between those populations listed, that are based on long-term decline and the ones listed based on rapid short-term decline,

Recognising that using 7.5 generations instead of three generations required by the relevant criteria of other international assessment processes, such as the IUCN Red List, the European Red List of Birds and the EU Birds Directive Article 12 reporting, and wishing to minimise conflicting interpretation of the population status,

Wishing to enhance the robustness of early warning for rapidly declining populations,

Thanking the Technical Committee for its work over the past triennium on revisiting the earlier adopted guidance on the interpretation of the term “*significant long-term decline*” and proposing the establishment of a new category to the key of classification on Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3 based on rapid short-term decline (document AEWA/MOP 7.20),

Taking into account Resolution 7.3 on the adoption of amendments to the AEWA annexes that, *inter alia*, amended category 3(c) of Column A and category 2(c) of Column B based on (significant) long-term decline and established new category 3(e) of Column A and category 2(e) of Column B based on rapid short-term decline used in classifying populations on Table 1 of AEWA Annex 3,

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Adopts* the definition of and guidance for interpretation of the terms “*long-term decline*” and “*rapid short-term decline*” as set out in Appendix I to this resolution, to replace the definition and guidance previously adopted by Resolution 5.7.

APPENDIX I

Definition of and Guidance for interpretation of the terms “*long-term decline*” and “*rapid short-term decline*” of waterbird populations

Definitions

A population in '*long-term decline*', is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined by at least 10% in numbers or range over a period of three generations.

A population in '*rapid short-term decline*' is one where the best available data, information or assessments indicate that it has declined at least at a rate that is equivalent to a predicted long-term decline of 30% over three generations based on 10 years of the most recent data.

Guidance for the application of this definition

1. Where there are only poor quantitative assessments of trends at the international scale, international trends should be assessed, on the basis of best expert knowledge and other available information, bearing in mind the scale of decline indicated in the definition above.
2. Where one biogeographical population shows different trends in different countries, if data allows, the rate of population change should be calculated using the national trends weighted by the geometric mean of the national population estimate.
3. Trend information for biogeographical populations at international scales is not always available over three generations. In such situations, equivalent rates of decline may be used over shorter periods, but not shorter than 10 years, and based on a sustained decline at an annual rate that would produce a 10% decline over the three generations.
4. The population should be classified as being in rapid short-term decline, if the short-term (i.e. 10 years) rate of population change is equivalent to a 30% decline over three generations.
5. The delimitation of decline rates resulting from natural fluctuations should be based on the best expert knowledge, including information on the availability of suitable habitats.
6. Care is needed in applying this definition to monitoring data uncritically. There may be instances where a change of a population's range or distribution results in a decrease in numbers of a population counted, as a consequence of a greater proportion of the population now occurring in areas where there is less monitoring. Lower thresholds may be appropriate for a decreasing range, where it is accompanied by population decrease. Raw count data will always need expert interpretation.
7. The geometric mean of population size ranges should generally be taken as the basis of population trend calculations. Following IUCN Red List criteria definitions, generation length is the average age of parents of the current cohort (i.e. new-born individuals in the population). Each significant long-term decline revealed by the above-mentioned calculations will be examined, analysed and approved by the Technical Committee.
8. Where the size of a population is known to be low (<100,000), expert judgments as to trend status should be undertaken on a precautionary basis. This is especially important given recent findings of a low genetic variation of a number of waterbird populations - the implication being that the effective population size is much (possibly by a factor of 10) smaller than the observed population size. In these cases, a population may become unviable in the long-term (owing to vulnerability to changing environmental events) at a higher population size than previously thought.