



13th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
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REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Introduction

At the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA (MOP6) in November 2015, Parties adopted a new Communication Strategy¹ for the Agreement through [Resolution 6.10](#). At the same meeting, Parties also acknowledged the importance of funding to implement the Communication Strategy by adding additional wording to [Resolution 6.18](#) (on Financial and Administrative Matters) which recognized “*the need to provide adequate resources to support the implementation of the Communication Strategy*”.

Overall Aim: Support the Implementation of AEWA

The overall aim of the strategy is to guide the communication work of all relevant AEWA stakeholders, from countries (especially Parties) to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners to the Secretariat, with the primary purpose of supporting the implementation of the Agreement. As such, the strategy is also an important (high level) document for the Secretariat in terms of providing a strategic framework and valuable “communication guidance” for Secretariat activities and implementation efforts.

Useful Guiding Document

Over the past years, since its adoption, the new Communication Strategy has proven to be a useful tool and reference document, as it clearly defines AEWA’s communication objectives, niche and target audiences, etc. At the Secretariat-level, the strategy is primarily being used by both the AEWA Executive Secretary and the AEWA Information Officer to give strategic direction to the work of the Secretariat as well as the work being conducted by the Joint CMS + AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-Raising (IMCA) Unit for AEWA.

Communication, Education and Public Awareness Raising (CEPA)

As at June 2018, a total of 28 AEWA Parties had nominated National Focal Points for Communication, Education and Public Awareness Raising (CEPA) in accordance with AEWA Resolution 5.5. All Focal Point nominations are communicated to the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and an up-to-date list of AEWA CEPA Focal Points is published on the AEWA website at the following location: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/cepa>.

Information on the roles and responsibilities of CEPA Focal Points, as well as a designation form can be found on the above-mentioned webpage. Parties are encouraged to continue to nominate AEWA CEPA Focal Points, despite the passing of the deadline mentioned in [Resolution 5.5](#).

¹ The AEWA Communication Strategy is publicly available and can be downloaded from the AEWA Website at: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/cepa>

AEWA Resolution 6.10, adopted at MOP6 in November 2015, includes a request to both the AEWA CEPA Focal Points and CEPA Expert, to provide active support to the communication work of the Agreement, for example through the identification of priority issues and partners for communication, development of communication plans, communication products and key messages.

The Secretariat plans to increase its efforts to utilize this growing resource and to mobilize the AEWA CEPA network in the years to come, including through the development of a CEPA Resource Hub (a central web portal for training and education material focused on waterbirds and wetlands) for which it will seek voluntary contributions from countries interested in supporting such work.

Thematic CEPA Expert on the AEWA Technical Committee

In line with AEWA Resolution 5.5, Ms Oleysa Petrovych (Ukraine) was nominated as the Thematic Expert for CEPA on the AEWA Technical Committee (TC) in May 2015. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat was able to support Ms Petrovych's participation in the 13th and 14th Meetings of the TC. At both meetings, Ms Petrovych acted as Chair of the TC Working Group (WG) on Education and Information (WG 6) which identified CEPA-related activities for inclusion in the TC's Work Plan for the period 2016 – 2018. In her capacity as TC Thematic CEPA Expert, Ms Petrovych also contributed to the AEWA Strategic Plan Revision Process Workshop (28 – 30 June 2016 in Bonn, Germany) as well as in the Plan of Action for Africa 2019 – 2027 Development Workshop which took place 10-12 October 2017 in Dakar.

Secretariat Communication and Outreach Efforts

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is involved in a number of activities, which both directly and indirectly contribute to the implementation of the Communication Strategy. For example, the work being conducted under the AEWA African Initiative, the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP), or projects such as the international EU LIFE + Nature Project for the Lesser White-fronted Goose and others all make significant contributions towards the implementation of the AEWA Communication Strategy.

Many of the AEWA Single-Species Action Plans (SSAPs) have their own set of education and awareness-raising components, which could also be seen as being efforts in line with the overall communication objectives outlined in the AEWA Communication Strategy and which also support the implementation of the Agreement per se. However, the remaining focus of this report is mainly on activities that fall under the remit of the Joint CMS + AEWA Information Management, Communications and Awareness-raising Unit for AEWA.

Summary of IMCA Activities

Below is a summary of the work that has been done by the Secretariat to support the implementing the AEWA Communication Strategy. The focus of the report is on major communication activities that have been conducted by the Joint IMCA Unit for AEWA since the adoption of the strategy.

Website News Production

In total, 103 website news articles have been featured on the AEWA website since January 2016. The published stories report on current AEWA activities such as meetings, major events and publications and aim to keep the wider AEWA network informed of the activities of the Secretariat and other AEWA stakeholders. The articles are usually drafted by the responsible officers at the Secretariat and then edited and prepared for web publishing by the IMCA Unit. For a full overview of news articles ever published on the AEWA website, please visit the following link: <http://www.unep-awa.org/en/news>.

Thematic Pages for the AEWA Website

Work on a number of thematic pages began in late 2017 and has intensified in 2018. Under the guidance of the AEWA Executive Secretary, the IMCA Unit is preparing special web presentations around key topics such as 1.) Climate Change 2.) Lead Poisoning and 3.) Renewable Energy. The intention is to bring together all relevant information around these topics into a single, well-presented webpage on the AEWA website.

The goal is to create content that will act as both a useful introduction on the topics as they relate to AEWA and as a gateway and hub for all relevant and available information relating to the given topic (resolutions, publications, news, events etc.). At the time of writing (June 2018) the Thematic Page on the topic of Lead Poisoning was under final expert review and almost ready to be publicly launched.

Electronic Newsletter

An Electronic Newsletter, the so-called AEWA E-Newsletter, is regularly prepared and disseminated by the IMCA Unit to 3,000+ AEWA contacts via email. The E-Newsletter is a selection of the main AEWA news stories from a period covering 4-6 months arranged in an HTML enriched email. The E-Newsletter is produced in-house using a custom E-Newsletter building tool (part of the CMS Family Website Infrastructure) and sent out in both English and French. In the period of this report (January 2017 – May 2018) a total of three AEWA E-Newsletters were prepared and disseminated to the AEWA Network. All AEWA E-Newsletters can also be found on the AEWA website at the following location: <http://www.unep-awea.org/en/publications/newsletter>.

- **AEWA E-Newsletter – Issue # 48 / April 2018** [<http://www.unep-awea.org/en/node/4039>]
- **AEWA E-Newsletter – Issue # 47 / December 2017** [<http://www.unep-awea.org/en/node/3928>]
- **AEWA E-Newsletter – Issue # 46 / May 2017** [<http://www.unep-awea.org/en/node/3802>]

Social Media Highlights (2016 – 2018)

In addition to the official website and other online tools, the IMCA Unit manages the AEWA Twitter and Facebook social media channels. Over the course of the reporting period (January 2017 – June 2018) the number of AEWA Facebook page fans grew from 1140 in January 2017 to 1,464 in June 2018, while the number of twitter followers grew to a total of 1,110. The channels are being used mainly to promote unique AEWA content published on the AEWA website and/or selected AEWA-relevant content from major partners and active members of the wider AEWA community. It should be noted that the growth of the channels is entirely organic, meaning that no paid advertising is used on any of the AEWA accounts.

Press and Media

The IMCA Unit coordinates the production of press releases, media advisories and op-eds to highlight major AEWA achievements, reports and special events such as MOPs and World Migratory Bird Day. The IMCA team works with the UN Department of Public Information, UNEP DCPI, UNEP Regional Offices and Deutsche Welle (German international broadcaster) and other media outlets to try to enhance coverage of AEWA in the media. In this context, it has facilitated interviews with UN Radio and other broadcasting stations in Europe and Africa with the AEWA Executive Secretary and with other relevant experts, for example on the topic of lead poisoning. Op-eds are prepared and placed in targeted media outlets to emphasize the importance of conserving migratory birds and to highlight important issues relating to AEWA and flyway conservation in general.

Joint Outreach Campaign: World Migratory Bird Day

The IMCA Unit is charged with managing the public outreach and awareness-raising activities of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, of which the primary annual outreach campaign continues to be World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD). Below is a summary of some of the campaign highlights over the course of the reporting period January 2017 – June 2018. It should be noted that the campaign now has two peak days throughout the year, i.e. on both the second Saturday in May and on the second Saturday in October.

Since its inception, the campaign has triggered over 2900 events in 144 different countries, with an average of 210 registered events each year.

Transatlantic Cooperation Towards a Unified Campaign

In January 2017, upon the kind invitation of Environment for the Americas (EFTA), AEWA's Information Officer/IMCA Coordinator was invited to participate in the annual Board Meeting of the International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) Initiative in Washington, D.C. The meeting helped pave the way to a process of greater consolidation and cooperation between the two "migratory bird day" initiatives, which had been developing independently and with limited alignment since 2006.

On 26 October 2017, in the margins of the CMS COP12 in Manila, AEWA, CMS and EFTA signed a Partnership Agreement, which formally unites two of the world's largest bird education campaigns, International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) and World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), in a bid to strengthen global recognition and appreciation of migratory birds and highlight the urgent need for their conservation. In December 2018, another planning meeting between EFTA, CMS and AEWA took place in Bonn, where the decision was made that the new joint campaign would adopt the single name of "*World Migratory Bird Day*" and that major events to celebrate the day would be organized twice a year).

World Migratory Bird Day 2017: Their Future is Our Future

With the theme "Their Future is our Future", World Migratory Bird Day 2017 was strategically aligned with the theme of CMS COP12, which took place in Manila, the Philippines in October 2017. Also in line with the global UN Sustainable Development Agenda, WMBD 2017 focused on highlighting the links between sustainable development and the protection of the environment, in particular, the links between sustainable development and the conservation of migratory birds.

The funding available for the 2017 campaign was significantly less than for previous campaigns. To overcome the shortcomings in funding, the IMCA Unit worked with the United Nations Volunteer – Online Volunteering Programme to engage a designer for the official WMBD Poster and the Trailer. World Migratory Bird Day 2017 was made possible through these UN Volunteers as well as through the funding received from the Governments of Finland, Germany and the CMS Raptors MOU. A total of 229 events in 74 different countries were registered on the WMBD website in 2017.

World Migratory Bird Day 2018: Unifying Our Voices for Bird Conservation

The theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2018 is "Unifying Our Voices for Bird Conservation" and it is the first year in which WMBD is truly united with the Americas and events are being held both on the second Saturday in May and in October 2018. Hence, 2018 is an important transition year in the history of World Migratory Bird Day. At the time of writing (June 2018), the WMBD website already registered over 410 unique WMBD events in close to 70 countries.

An initial analysis has shown, that the WMBD May event triggered considerable media interests and social media activity globally. For example, during the period 1-28 May 2018, there were a record number of news articles published (over 1070!) that included the keyword "World Migratory Bird Day", with a peak potential reach of news articles increasing to 71.73 million on 12 May 2018. In terms of social media activity the hashtag impressions for #WorldMigratoryBirdDay reached more than 12 million on 12 May alone and was used in more than 850 unique posts.

The IMCA Unit is working closely with EFTA to try to align and harmonize the global presentation of World Migratory Bird Day. Work is ongoing to try to establish greater ownership of the campaign amongst the main flyway actors along the African-Eurasian, the East Asian-Australasian and Americas Flyways.

A stronger emphasis is also being placed on fundraising, especially towards the 2019 campaign, as significant resources will be needed to properly re-brand and develop a state-of-the-art website for the new global campaign. It should also be noted that all materials produced for the 2018 campaign are being developed and printed with very limited financial resources and support from the CMS Raptors MOU.