

**16<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
*25-29 January 2021, Virtual conference format*

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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT**

**Introduction**

This report covers the work of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for the period between March 2019 and December 2020.

Since March 2020, the work of the Secretariat and related meetings have been heavily impacted by the COVID pandemic. Just as the Secretariat has made a shift to telecommuting mode, the meetings have been reshaped to a virtual mode. The Secretariat has been able to adapt very rapidly to the new conditions and was able to deliver its work in an efficient and effective manner as shown in this report.

The report is divided into six sections:

1. Organization and Staffing of the Secretariat;
2. General Management, which includes recruitment of Parties and cooperation with other organizations;
3. Science, Implementation and Compliance;
4. African Initiative;
5. Capacity-building; and
6. Communication, Information Management and Outreach.

Activities reported in detail in other documents for the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TC are only mentioned briefly here, with a reference to the relevant substantive document containing more information.

The day-to-day work of the Agreement Secretariat, which includes responding to incoming correspondence, maintaining an extensive network of contacts, internal meetings with CMS, UNEP and/or UN Heads of Agencies etc. are not specifically mentioned in this report.

**1. Organization and Staffing of the Secretariat**

1.1 Organization of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is organized into four units which cover four broad areas of work (as described in Annex 1 – Organizational Structure and Annex II - Staff Composition of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat). The individual staff members and units work closely as a team, interacting with each other daily on cross-cutting issues; It should be noted that the AEWA Communication Unit is part of the joint Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA) co-funded by AEWA and CMS. In order to support the IMCA Team, the CMS Secretariat provided a part-time P4 from April to December 2020 to coordinate the team.

Without the extension of the part-time positions through voluntary contributions, the availability of staff funded entirely through voluntary contributions and the support of interns, the Secretariat would not have been in a position to deliver all services requested.

In 2019 and 2020, the Secretariat applied unsuccessfully for a UNEP Junior Professional Officer to support the work of the Technical Committee. We will apply again for 2021 as this position is crucial.

## 1.2 Staffing situation

As of 31 December 2020, the Secretariat comprises eleven staff members: seven Professional Staff members (P staff), four General Staff members (G staff) and in addition one consultant. The core budget covers 7.3 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs), while voluntary contributions and savings have allowed the addition of 3.3 full-time equivalent positions and the consultant.

### Staff funded by the core budget

There have been no major changes to the team during the period covered by the report. The positions of the African Initiative Coordinator (P-2) and the Programme Assistant (G-5) were partly funded (50 per cent) through the AEWA core budget 2019-2021. The Secretariat was able to maintain the P-2 position at 100 per cent and the G-5 position at 80 per cent in 2019 and 2020, thanks to voluntary contributions received from Germany, Luxemburg, Switzerland and the European Commission. The Secretariat expects to be able to maintain both positions at this level until the end of the triennium and will need to secure additional funding beyond this period.

### Staff fully dependent on voluntary contributions (Fixed-term project posts)

#### Programme Officer (P-3) for Species Conservation (Single Species Action Plan Support and the coordination of implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Single Species Action Plan)

The job description of the Associate Programme Officer (P2) for Single Species Action Plan Support and the coordination of implementation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose International Single Species Action Plan has been reviewed and upgraded to a P3 position, following Resolution 7.12 paragraph 21. The Secretariat is grateful to the Norwegian Environment Agency for its support of this important position. After a competitive process of selection, Ms Nina Mikander has been promoted as of 1 October 2020.

#### Associate Programme Officer (P-2) and Programme Management Assistant (G-5) for the AEWA European Goose Management Platform

Due to a lack of funding, the Secretariat was not in the position to extend beyond July 2019 the contract of the Assistant to the European Goose Management Platform, who had been recruited in November 2017. Currently, the AEWA European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) is managed at the Secretariat level by one full-time P2 project post and the assistance is being provided through a consultancy until July 2021. The P2 position is financially secured until December 2021.

## **2. General Management**

### 2.1. 25<sup>th</sup> AEWA Anniversary

Due to the COVID pandemic, the Secretariat was unfortunately not able to organize a ceremony with the Dutch Government, our depositary, to celebrate the signature of the Treaty in The Hague on 16 June 1995. We created a special webpage for this event <https://www.unep-awa.org/en/awa-25th-anniversary> which displays the statements of many stakeholders and an history of the negotiations leading to the treaty.

To mark the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agreement the Programme Officer for Species Conservation developed a video in collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology which showcases the importance of critical sites for migratory waterbirds across the African-Eurasian flyway, emphasizing the urgent need for the protection of these sites. Prepared with input from various stakeholders throughout the flyway and highlighting AEWA priority species such as the Lesser White-fronted Goose, Sociable Lapwing, Lesser Flamingo etc. the video titled "[A Call for Cooperation: Saving the Places Migratory Birds Call Home](#)" was launched on the date of the anniversary in both English and French. The video can be made available in other languages subject to availability of funds and the animations produced by Cornell can be made available for further use by

AEWA partners via the Secretariat. The video marks the first such collaboration between Cornell and the CMS Family.

## 2.2. Recruitment of Parties

Since TC15, two new Contracting Parties have acceded to AEWA (the Republic of Malawi on 1 September 2019 and the Republic of Armenia on 1 July 2020). In October 2019 Turkey, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan were visited by the Secretariat to present to the national authorities the benefit of joining AEWA. As a result of numerous contacts, Turkmenistan became a Party on 1 January 2021 bringing the total number of Parties to 82, 38 in Africa and 44 in Eurasia.

Efforts to recruit additional Parties in Africa, Europe and Central Asia, including Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cameroon, Greece, the Russian Federation and Zambia are continuing together with the promotion of the Agreement in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Portuguese-speaking African Range States.

In 2019, the English, French and Arabic versions of the Agreement text have been updated by the Secretariat and the Depositary, as well as the Russian version in May 2020. The Portuguese version of the Agreement text has also been updated to the benefit of the Portuguese-speaking Range States.

## 2.3. The AEWA Standing Committee

The 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee (StC) took place from 11 to 13 December 2019 in Bristol, UK. The meeting was kindly hosted by the UK Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and was chaired by Mr Simon Mackown.

The StC15 meeting report is available at:

[https://www.unep-aeawa.org/sites/default/files/document/stc\\_15\\_report\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.unep-aeawa.org/sites/default/files/document/stc_15_report_final_0.pdf)

## 2.4. AEWA Institutional Development

Following a mandate given by the StC in July 2018, the AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat, attended a meeting of the CAF Range States in Lonavala, Maharashtra on 18-19 November 2019 convened by the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to discuss the way forward to institutionalize the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan.

This matter was then discussed at the CMS COP13 and the results were incorporated in Resolution 12.11 rev COP13 [https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms\\_cop13\\_res.12.11\\_rev.cop13\\_e.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms_cop13_res.12.11_rev.cop13_e.pdf) which says:

*Para 8. Welcomes the further efforts by the Government of India to continue the collaborative process, in close consultation with the CAF Range States and with the CMS and AEWA Secretariats, to develop under the CMS an institutional framework, with the Secretariat provided by the CMS Secretariat along with a coordinating office hosted by the Government of India, to support the implementation of increased conservation action for migratory birds and their habitats in the CAF, as well as to support this initiative with resources, in coordination with the existing CMS avian-related instruments;*

*Para 9. Further welcomes the commitment by the Government of India to provide resources for this process including the establishment of the institutional framework, and the provision of a coordinating liaison office in India, under the umbrella of the CMS Secretariat in Bonn.*

## 2.5. Cooperation with UNEP and Other Organisations

### UNEP and CMS

On 23 August 2019, the CMS Family (CMS, EUROBATS and AEWA) met the newly appointed UNEP Executive Director to discuss how to increase the programmatic cooperation and cooperation with UNEP. The Executive Director reaffirmed the importance of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to achieve the

objectives of UNEP and proposed a closer collaboration between Nairobi and the MEAs. In the framework of the UNEP on-line course on MEA implementation for African countries, the African coordinator delivered a presentation on AEWA on 18 November 2020.

As representatives of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, the Executive Secretary and the Head of SICU have attended the CMS COP13, 17-22 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India while two other staff members from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat have supported the CMS team. Ms Nina Mikander co-facilitated the Working Group on avian issues and Marie-Therese Kämper helped with the logistic issues to the great satisfaction of the CMS Executive Secretary.

The COVID pandemic highlighted very quickly the link between human health, wildlife health and globally the environment. In order to fight against wrong assumptions and negative actions leading to bat eradication, the CMS Family including AEWA has worked on a document “Facts about bats and COVID 19” published in April 2020 and send to Parties through a CMS/AEWA/Eurobats notification. For AEWA, it is the notification 2020.002. <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/2020002-facts-about-bats-and-covid-19>

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published in July 2020 a report: ‘Preventing the Next Pandemic – Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission’. Contributing authors include CMS Executive Secretary, Amy Fraenkel and CMS Scientific Adviser, Marco Barbieri, while Sergey Dereliev, Head of the AEWA SICU, and Dr Suran Gazaryan of EUROBATS served as reviewers. For more information, please follow the link and/or download the full report at: <https://www.cms.int/en/news/unep-report-%E2%80%93-preventing-next-pandemic>

CMS and its Family set the course for developing their contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which presents the opportunity to raise the visibility of migratory wildlife and promote its conservation. The CMS Standing Committee held in Bonn, 23-24 October 2018, endorsed the establishment of a Working Group (WG) on the development of CMS Family contributions to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The AEWA Secretariat is a member of this WG. The Third Meeting of the WG on the CMS Family inputs to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) is tentatively scheduled at the end of March 2021. For more information, please see document AEWA/TC 16.45 “Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”.

On programmatic synergies, items such as the illegal killing of birds, lead poisoning and the energy sector are led by CMS. The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is involved in all relevant task forces.

As a member of the CMS Multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force, the Secretariat participated in the fourth meeting on 19 - 20 September 2019 in Paris and the fifth meeting (virtual) on 30 November – 1 December 2020. For more information please see: <https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/fourth-meeting-energy-task-force>

As a member of the CMS Illegal Killing Task Force, the Secretariat participated in the third MIKT meeting on 8 - 10 May 2019 in Rome. For more information please see: [https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms\\_mikt3\\_meeting-report\\_0.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms_mikt3_meeting-report_0.pdf) and <https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/fifth-meeting-multi-stakeholder-energy-task-force-virtual-meeting>

As a member of the CMS Renewable Energy Task Force, the AEWA Executive Secretary chaired a side event organized by the CMS task Force and Birdlife International in the margins of the CMS COP13 the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020: “Connected Energy Solutions for a Connected World: Rapidly Reconciling Renewable Energy Investment with Biodiversity Conservation”.

The Secretariat also participated in the two webinar sessions led by the CMS Energy Task Force on the importance of reconciling renewable energy developments with the conservation of migratory species. The AEWA Secretariat participated actively in the first webinar to explain the role of the task force. A total of 250 participants registered, and this experience shows clearly the power of using webinars to disseminate information and discuss issues with participants. <https://vimeo.com/492004020/c17decaf74>

[Ramsar Convention](#)

Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention has focused mainly on African topics.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat organized in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat, the Government of Benin and the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, an AEWA Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands for francophone Range States in West and Central Africa from 6 to 10 May 2019 in Cotonou, Benin. This TOT was made possible thanks to the generous financial and in-kind contributions from the Government of Benin and the European Commission's Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Thematic Programme Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA) with UN Environment. For more information and the TOT report please follow the link:

<https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/training-trainers-flyway-conservation>

The Ramsar Secretariat is also a partner of the RESSOURCE project (see below) and both Secretariats collaborate in the framework of this project.

### *BirdLife International*

The Secretariat participated as a panellist in a webinar organized by Birdlife International for the second peak of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on 8 October 2020: "Birds connect people along the East Atlantic Flyway". <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/east-atlantic-flyway-webinar-held-mark-world-migratory-bird-day>

### *International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)*

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat attended the 66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the CIC on 1-4 May 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia. The meeting was held in the framework of an international conference hosted by the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism: Crossroads - Leading the Way for Wildlife Conservation. On this occasion, the Executive Secretary participated in special events on migratory birds and presented the concept of adaptive management for migratory waterbirds. These meetings were also a good opportunity to present AEWA to the Minister in charge of the Environment as Namibia is not a Party. The 67<sup>th</sup> GA had to be cancelled due to the travel restrictions linked with the COVID.

CIC supports also the WMBD campaign.

### *FAO and RESSOURCE Project*

The project entitled RESSOURCE is the acronym for the French equivalent of "*Strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment*". The ecosystems at the core of the project are based on the Senegal River Valley, the Inner Niger Delta, Lake Chad and parts of the River Nile. These are areas upon which almost one billion people depend for agriculture, rearing of livestock, fishing and hunting, and which are equally of critical importance to millions of waterbirds.

The project will attempt to evaluate the sustainability of exploiting the resources represented by waterbirds thanks to its integrated approach which aims to: (i) assess the resources in terms of the numbers, distribution and socio-economic importance, especially for rural communities (ii) preserve its habitats and (iii) propose conservation measures at community level. This project led by FAO and supported by the Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial (FFEM) involves not only the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat but also other key partners such as: ONCFS, CIRAD, OMPO, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and the Ramsar Convention.

The Executive Secretary attended the third Steering Committee meeting of the RESSOURCE project at the FAO Headquarters on 12 - 13 June 2019, where the results of the programme of work were discussed between all partners. The next Steering Committee should have been hosted by the AEWA Secretariat in Bonn but due to the travel restrictions because of the COVID pandemic, this meeting was held online 2 – 4 June 2020. The AEWA Secretariat renewed its invitation for 2021.

The project is described in this leaflet:

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8998en/ca8998en.pdf>

For further information, please see the last newsletter including on interview of the AEWA ES:

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9945en/ca9945en.pdf>

For 2021, one of the main products to be delivered by the RESSOURCE Project is a MOOC (Massive On-Line Open Course) on waterbird identification and monitoring and the integrated management of sub-Saharan wetlands in order to increase the network of observers and to insure the future of the monitoring and management.

#### Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

The Secretariat continued to contribute to the implementation of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI), established under the Arctic Council's biodiversity-related working group CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna). The Secretariat serves on the Steering Group for the African-Eurasian Flyway and attended the Arctic Seabirds Experts Meeting on 26 - 29 March 2019 in Iceland.

#### 2.6. Fundraising

From March 2019 to date, voluntary contributions received were earmarked for the:

- European Goose Management Platform (EGMP);
- Coordination and implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose;
- Implementation of the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA);
- International Plan for Benguela;
- Population status assessment of waterbird populations in Central Asia; and
- Production of reports for MOP8.

The project *Time for Action for Migratory Species – Phase II* to be funded under the GPGC Programme Cooperation Agreement between the Commission and UN Environment has been approved and covers the period from September 2020 to December 2023. It will provide support for training activities (regional flyway TOT courses and on-line national reporting training) and implementation of the Slaty Egret and Northern Bald Ibis Action Plans.

The UNEP/AEWA Secretariat would like to express its appreciation for the financial support received towards the implementation of the Agreement from Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK. In addition, the Secretariat would like to thank the countries which support financially the EGMP: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK.

At MOP7, Parties requested the Secretariat to document the in-kind contributions for the implementation of the Agreement as of 1 January 2019. These in-kind contributions, essential to implement the resolutions adopted by Parties, are mostly related to meetings for training or ISSAP implementation and to scientific expertise (in particular for the EGMP). The Secretariat would like to express its appreciation to Benin, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, The Netherlands, Romania, South Africa and Uganda. The EGMP benefited from in-kind contributions from various Range States participating in the process.

### **3. Science, Implementation and Compliance**

#### 3.1. AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans and AEWA International Species Working Groups

An overview on the current status of the establishment and coordination of AEWA International Species Expert and Working Groups is provided in document AEWA/TC 16.13 "Draft Summary of the Current Status of Single Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement". During this triennium the development of one new AEWA International Species Action Plan has been facilitated by the AEWA Secretariat for the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*). The Secretariat continued to provide the coordination for the European Goose Management Platform as well as for the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group. In addition, the Secretariat facilitated a number of meetings of the established inter-governmental AEWA International Species Working Groups as well as organized

other meetings and supported activities such as fundraising efforts aimed at implementing the various AEWA International Species Action and Management Plans adopted for priority populations under the Agreement.

- *AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group*

As mentioned above, the coordination of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group (*Anser erythropus*) continues to be facilitated by the AEWA Programme Officer for Species Conservation based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The Secretariat is grateful to the Government of Norway which has renewed its financial support for 2020-2022.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Working Group took place on 11-13 November 2019 in Bucharest hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and organized together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds in the framework of the EU LIFE Red-breasted Goose project. All meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

The EU LIFE project “Providing a climate-resilient network of critical sites for the Lesser White-fronted Goose in Europe” was approved for funding by the European Commission in November 2020 and will run until August 2025. The lead partner is the Lithuanian Ornithological Society and the AEWA Secretariat is a project partner and co-beneficiary. For more details, see <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/new-lesser-white-fronted-goose-flyway-project-approved-under-eu-life>

- *AEWA Red-breasted Goose International Working Group*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Red-breasted Goose International Working Group (*Branta ruficollis*) took place back-to-back with the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA Lesser White-fronted Goose IWG on 13-15 of November 2019 in Bucharest hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and organized together with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds in the framework of the EU LIFE Red-breasted Goose project. All meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

- *AEWA Grey Crowned-crane International Working Group*

The first meeting of the Grey Crowned-crane IWG was held in Entebbe, Uganda, 24 - 26 July 2019. A concrete implementation plan until 2022 was elaborated and adopted. Meeting documents are available on the [AEWA website](#).

- *AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Meeting of the Eastern European breeding Range States under the AEWA Black-tailed Godwit International Working Group was organized remotely by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and Sovon on the 25 August 2020. Meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

- *AEWA Eurasian Curlew International Working Group*

In the framework of the AEWA Eurasian Curlew International Working Group, the breeding range states attended a meeting hosted by the French Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, Paris, 18 September 2019, to discuss the development of an Adaptive Harvest Management Programme. Meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Meeting of the Breeding Range States under the AEWA Eurasian Curlew International Working Group was organized remotely by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the RSPB on 10 November 2020. Meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

- *AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Working Group was held in Dullstroom, South Africa on 5-7 November 2019 with the main goal of discussing and agreeing its implementation plan for 2020-2022. The meeting took place close to the Middelpunt Wetland which was recently discovered to be a breeding site for this elusive species; previously the only known breeding site was Berga Wetland in Ethiopia. Meeting documents are available on the [AEWA website](#).

- *AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group*

The first Meeting of the AEWA European Seaduck International Working Group, took place as an online meeting from 9 to 10 December 2020, hosted by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. The Working Group is tasked with coordinating the implementation of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans for the Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) and the Velvet Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). Meeting documents are available on the AEWA [website](#).

Other meetings:

- *Action-planning for the Common Eider (Somateria mollissima)*

Range states as well as international conservation and hunting organizations met online 15-17. September 2020 to develop an AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the AEWA-listed migratory populations of the Common Eider. Funding for the action-planning process as well as the development of foreseen Adaptive Harvest Management Programme is kindly being provided by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as well as the Regional Government of Åland. Please look at the document AEWA/TC 16.11 Draft International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*).

As per the process agreed by the Range States at the action-planning workshop the Secretariat has convened a time-bound temporary Technical Group to work on the development of the Adaptive Harvest Management Programme. The Group is being coordinated by the Finnish Wildlife Agency.

- *AEWA International Multi-species Action Plan for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds*

In the framework of the IMSAP for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds, the Benguela Current Forage Fish Workshop was facilitated online by the Secretariat from Monday 2 to Wednesday 4 November 2020 hosted by the South African Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF). The workshop was organized in collaboration with the the Benguela Current Convention (BCC) and BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) with funding provided by the Government of the United Kingdom through Defra. Meeting documents including the adopted recommendations are available on the AEWA [website](#).

### 3.2. European Goose Management Platform (EGMP)

The EGMP has 15 participating Range States, 14 national governments and the European Commission: Belarus, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. Spain is participating in the Greylag Goose implementation process through data provision. Ireland is involved in the implementation of the Barnacle Goose ISSMP (East Greenland/Scotland & Ireland Population). Poland has designated a national expert to participate in the Taiga Bean Goose Task Force. Spain, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland and Russia officially remain non-participating Range States of the EGMP.

The coordination of the AEWA European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) continues to be facilitated by the EGMP Coordinator based at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in close collaboration with Aarhus University, functioning as the EGMP Data Centre. Under the coordination of the EGMP Data Centre, the International Modelling Consortium, consisting of an international partnership of scientific institutions, collaborates on the development of population models. Funding towards the functioning the EGMP, including the staffing costs as well as the implementation of projects has been jointly provided by the EGMP Range States.

The 4th Meeting of the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG4) took place on 18 - 20 June 2019 in Perth, Scotland, the United Kingdom, at the kind invitation of NatureScot. The annual meeting was preceded by a day of face-to-face meetings of the various Task Forces established under the EGMP. The EGM IWG received updates and decided on the next steps in the implementation of the International Single Species Action and Management Plans under the remit of the EGMP. Moreover, the EGM IWG discussed and agreed on options for the next steps towards the implementation phase of the ISSMPs for the Barnacle Goose and for the NW/SW European population of the Greylag Goose, including the development of Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes (AFMPs) and setting up Favourable Reference Values (FRVs). The report of the meeting can be found on the [EGMP website](#).

Following EGM IWG4, a Barnacle Goose Range State Meeting took place on 1 October 2019 in Reykjavík and was kindly hosted by the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. Important steps towards establishing population-specific Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes for the East Greenland/Scotland and Ireland Population and the Svalbard/South-west Scotland Population of the Barnacle Goose were agreed upon.

The second meeting of the EGMP Modelling consortium was held online on 18 November 2019. The 3rd Meeting of the Modelling Consortium took place virtually on 19-20 March 2020. The main items discussed were the development of the population models for the Barnacle, Greylag, Pink-footed and Taiga Bean Geese and the preparations for the annual EGM IWG meeting.

Originally scheduled to take place in Helsinki, the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AEWA European Goose Management International Working Group (EGM IWG5) went ahead for the first time in an online conference format from 15 to 18 June 2020. The meeting was chaired by Ms Camilla Uldal from Denmark, who was succeeded as Chair for the next two years by the UK's Mr Danny Heptinstall. Among other decisions, the Range States agreed on the process and next steps for the finalisation of the Barnacle Goose and Greylag Goose Adaptive Flyway Management Programmes (AFMP) which are envisaged to be ready for adoption in June 2021.

The report of the meeting can be found on the [EGMP website](#).

With three new Task Forces established at EGM IWG5, there are now six Task Forces operating under the EGMP:

- Pink-footed Goose Task Force
- Taiga Bean Goose Task Force
- Agriculture Task Force
- Barnacle Goose Task Force for Russia/Germany & Netherlands Population
- Barnacle Goose Task Force for E. Greenland/Scotland & Ireland and Svalbard/South-West Scotland Populations
- Greylag Goose Task Force for NW/SW European Population

The Task Forces for the Russia/Germany & Netherlands Population of Barnacle Goose, E. Greenland/Scotland & Ireland and Svalbard/South-West Scotland populations of Barnacle Goose and NW/SW European Population of Greylag Goose established at EGM IWG5 convened their first meetings in October 2020. The development of annual workplans, as part of the AFMPs for each Task Force and the range states has initiated, as well as coordinated action to collect data and establish monitoring protocols.

### 3.3. Implementation Review Process

For the first time a case under the AEWA Implementation Review Process (IRP) has been closed following the announcement that the United Kingdom has removed the Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) from the list of huntable species.

Since TC15 there were another five new IRP cases opened:

- France, hunting of the Eurasian Curlew;
- Kenya, powerline construction at Lake Elmenteita;
- Tunisia, urban development at Sebkhet Sejoumi;
- Portugal, airport development at Tagus estuary; and
- Germany, conservation of the Bewick's Swan in Schleswig-Holstein.

### 3.4. Lead shot being phased out in the EU

In 2016, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) initiated a process of compiling a report and draft regulation requested by the European Commission, in order to implement the AEWA provisions to phase out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. In 2020 until the final adoption of the regulation, the Secretariat has been actively communicating on the lead issue in wetlands using in particular social media, as well as participating in a video produced by the WWT (<https://vimeo.com/472273518/84e1c9a357>) and published op-ed on our website ("It is Time to Let Go of Lead" <https://www.unep-awa.org/en/news/it-time-let-go-lead>) and on the website of Open Access Government (<https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/lead-out-of-the-environment/89098/> ). The new

regulation was adopted in December 2020 and is expected to enter into force in early 2021. Once implemented, the EU and its Member States – representing 30 per cent of the current Contracting Parties to the Agreement - will be in full compliance with their AEWA legal obligations with respect to banning the use of lead gunshot for hunting in wetlands..

To know more about this new European legislation, please follow the link: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/comitology-register/screen/documents/064660/6/consult?lang=en>

The Secretariat should be invited in 2021 as an expert observer for the second discussion on lead in hunting sports including fishing in the ECHA Committee for Risk Assessment.

### 3.5. Climate resilient site network project

The project “Climate resilient site network in the African-Eurasian flyway” launched at MOP6 in November 2015 is funded by the International Climate Initiative of the German Government and coordinated by Wetlands International. The Secretariat is involved as a co-funder and contributor. The project has been developed on the basis of the AEWA climate change agenda and mandates from the MOP. It involves some site assessments, two pilot projects in Mali and Ethiopia, production of guidelines and training of practitioners in African Parties. The project is currently operating under a no-cost extension aiming at achieving all of its objectives.

### 3.6. Sustainable harvest

The Secretariat attended a meeting of the national hunting associations from countries of north-west Europe convened by the Danish Hunters Association (DHA) on 8 - 9 May 2019 in Billund, Denmark in order to discuss the contribution of the hunting community to the sustainable harvest and management of migratory waterbird populations. The Secretariat, together with representatives of Wetlands International and Aarhus University, set the scene for the discussions between the representatives of the hunting associations and outlined the main avenues through which the hunting community can make a contribution. The meeting resulted in the establishment of an informal waterfowlers’ network coordinated by DHA aiming at increasing the contribution of hunting community to the sustainable harvest and management.

The Secretariat attended the 2020 annual meeting of the waterfowlers’ network that took place virtually on 31 August – 1 September 2020.

## **4. African Initiative**

A comprehensive report is available through document AEWA/TC 16.6 “Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative”.

## **5. Capacity-Building**

Capacity-building activities for the period mainly focused on the African region but some other activities have already been mentioned above.

In the framework of the UNEP on-line course on MEAs implementation for African countries, the African coordinator has delivered a presentation on AEWA on 18 November 2020.

As mentioned previously, a training of trainers for francophone countries was organized in Cotonou, Benin, on 6-10 May 2019 on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds and wetlands.

A video entitled “Waterbird Monitoring in Africa: The Chad Experience”, was released in 2019 by the Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the AEWA African Initiative. The video was developed with the support of the RESSOURCE project. To see it please follow the link: <https://www.unep-awa.org/en/news/new-film-waterbird-monitoring-africa-chad-experience>

A number of web stories were published on the results of projects funded by the AEWA Small Grants Fund:

- AEWAs SGF Contributes to Increased Capacity for Conservation of Rift Valley Lakes in Kenya <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-sgf-contributes-increased-capacity-conservation-rift-valley-lakes-kenya>
- Capacity for Waterbird Monitoring Reinforced in Mauritania <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/capacity-waterbird-monitoring-reinforced-mauritania>
- Capacity Building in Nigeria through the AEWAs Small Grants Fund <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/capacity-building-nigeria-through-aewa-small-grants-fund>
- Successful Conclusion of Capacity Building Project in Côte d'Ivoire <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/successful-conclusion-capacity-building-project-cote-divoire>

The AEWAs Small Grants Fund (SGF) has so far benefited some 20 governmental and non-governmental organizations in 17 African countries by funding a wide range of conservation projects promoting AEWAs implementation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The AEWAs Small Grants Fund operations are unfortunately currently suspended due to a lack of funding but it still remains a good tool for capacity-building and we hope partners and Parties will support the SGF again in the near future.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Center for Conservation Media with the support of AEWAs released a new ten-minute film called "A Call for Cooperation: Saving the Places Migratory Birds Call Home". This great video showcases the importance and beauty of a number of critical sites for migratory waterbirds found across the African-Eurasian Flyway and can be seen by the general public. See also section 2.1 above.

## **6. Communication, Information Management and Outreach**

### Joint CMS/AEWAs Communications Unit

Through Resolution 6.22, the Meeting of the Parties requested the UNEP/AEWAs and UNEP/CMS Secretariats to develop a proposal within three months after MOP6 detailing implementation arrangements for the joint CMS/AEWAs Information Management, Communication and Awareness-raising Unit (IMCA Unit) including staff time and budget sharing ratios, management structure, monitoring and evaluation indicators, among others, to be approved by the Standing Committee. In order to support the IMCA Unit, the CMS Secretariat provided a part-time P4 from April to December 2020 as Coordinator.

Below is a summary of the main communication and information management related activities carried out by the IMCA Unit for AEWAs between March 2019 and December 2020.

### Information Management

The IMCA Unit technically manages and maintains all external websites and online tools of the UNEP/AEWAs Secretariat. This includes the management of the official AEWAs website, the AEWAs Technical Committee Workspace and a number of AEWAs Single Species Action Plan Working Group websites. In addition, the IMCA Unit has supported the development of the EGMP website and workspace.

The IMCA Unit is in charge of the technical management of the Online Meeting Registration System and Contacts Database, all of which are used by the UNEP/AEWAs Secretariat. The website analytics in place for the official AEWAs website show 65,280 unique users and 208,497 page views in the period from March 2019 to December 2020. There was a visible peak in website traffic on 16 June 2020, which marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWAs with 492 unique users (compared with an average of ca. 150) visiting the website over the course of one day.

In 2021, the websites will be migrated and operated through a completely new version of Drupal. This migration will be supervised by the IMCA team.

### Online National Reporting

The IMCA Unit worked closely with the AEWAs SICU and UNEP-WCMC to help set up AEWAs's MOP8 National Report in the Online Reporting System (ORS) launched in July 2020.

The IMCA Team also helped create the online reporting template for AEWAs's National Reporting on the Population Status of AEWAs-listed (native) and Non-[Native Species of Waterbirds (launched in June 2019) as well

as the online template for reporting on the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa to MOP8, which was launched in December 2020.

### Website News Production

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 prepared for web publishing by the IMCA Unit. A total of 51 website news articles and an Op-Ed were featured on the AEWA website between March 2019 and December 2020. For a full overview of news articles published on the AEWA website, please visit the following link: <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news>.

### Social Media Highlights

The IMCA Unit manages the AEWA Twitter and Facebook social media channels. 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. Over the course of the reporting period (March 2019 – December 2020) the number of AEWA Facebook page fans grew from 1,680 in February 2019 to 2,105 in December 2020, while the number of Twitter followers grew to a total of 2,017.

### Campaigns and Events

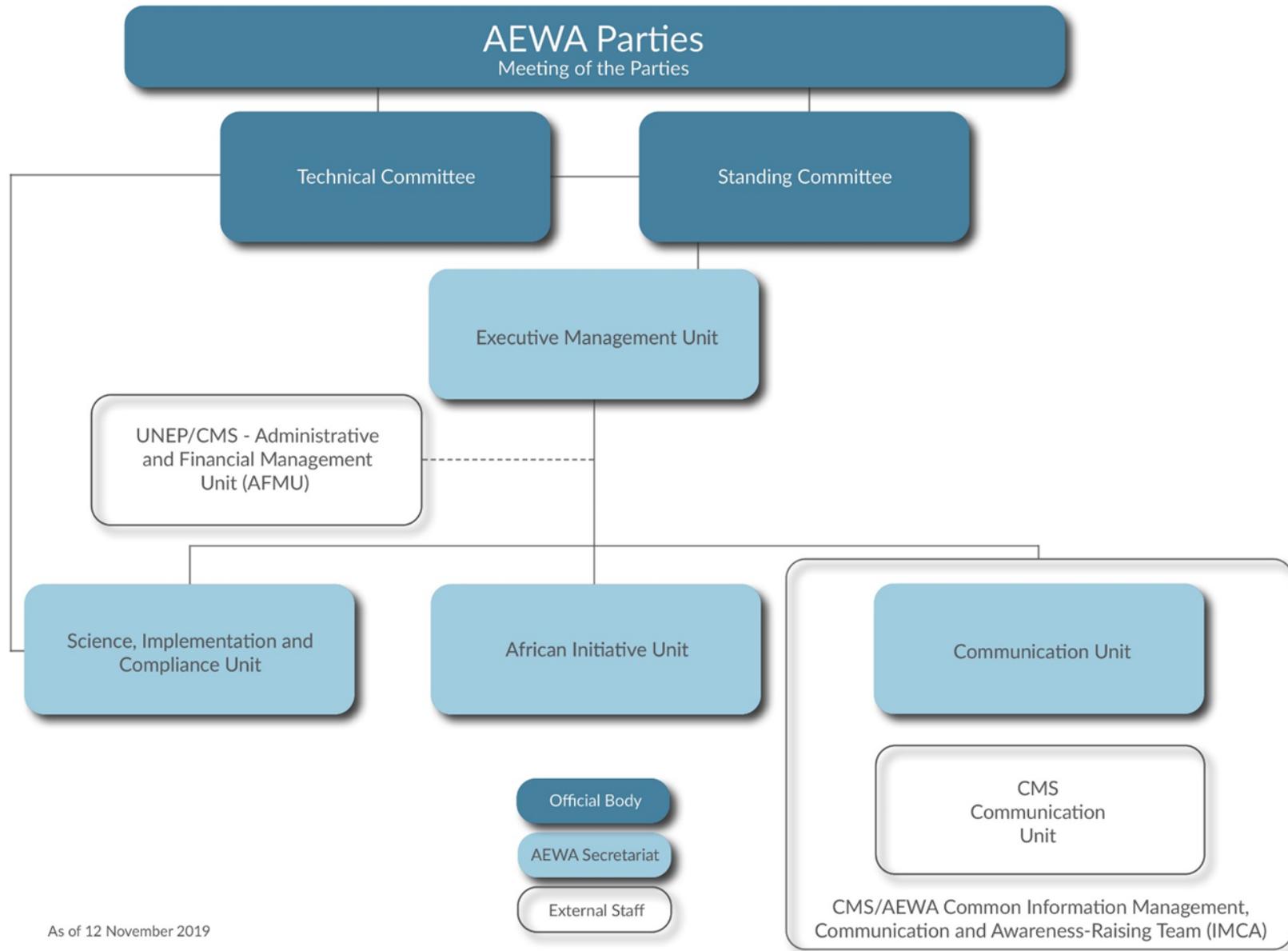
The IMCA Unit is charged with managing the public outreach and awareness-raising activities of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat. The primary outreach campaign for AEWA (and CMS) being led by the IMCA Unit continues to be World Migratory Bird Day. For details, please see the dedicated webpage: <https://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/>

The theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2019 was “*Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution*”. The two peak days of WMBD celebrations in 2019 took place on 11 May and 12 October.

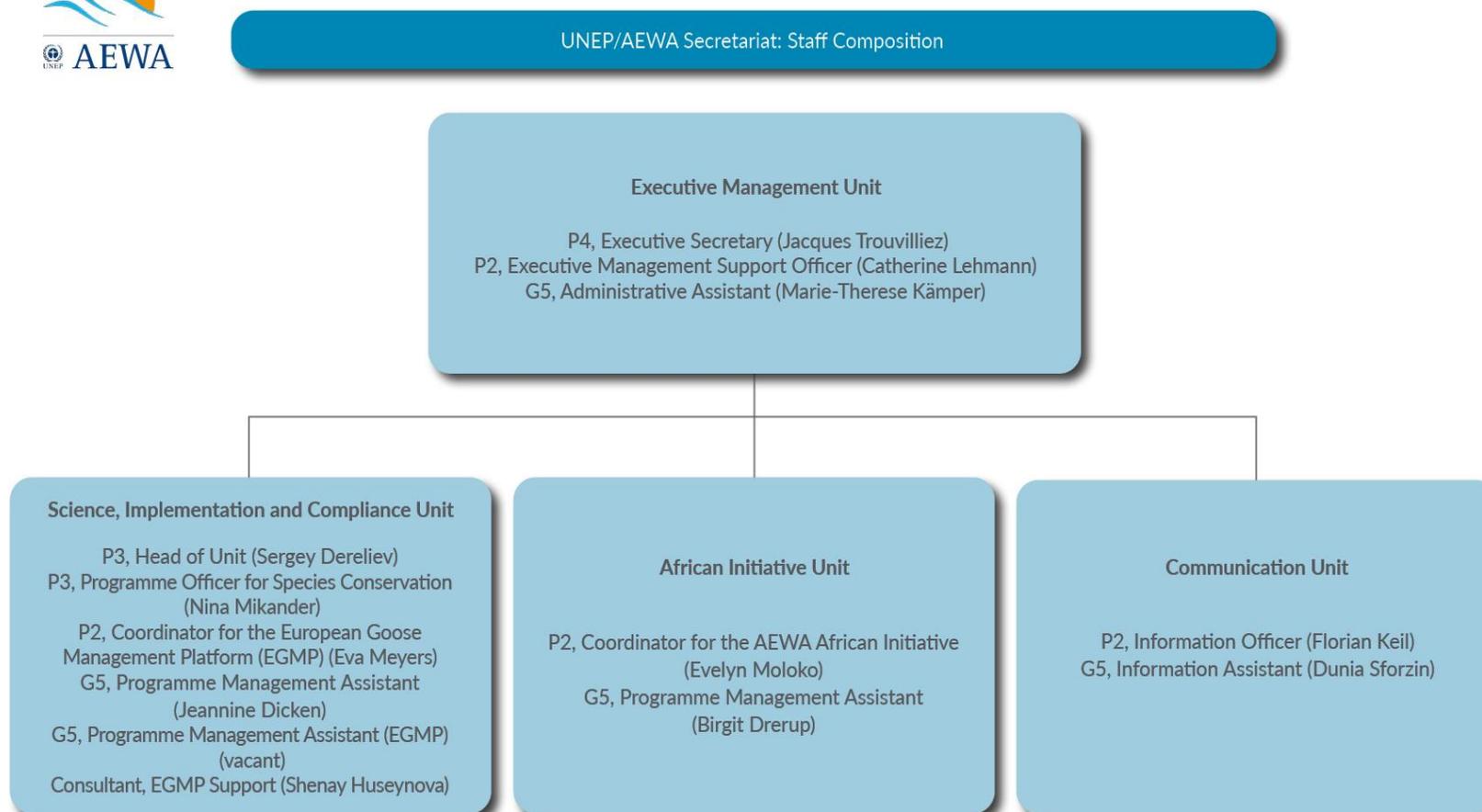
The theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2020 was “*Birds Connect our World*”. The two peak days of WMBD celebrations in 2020 took place on 9 May and 10 October.

To mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AEWA, the IMCA Unit created a dedicated webpage for the Anniversary in June 2020, which brought together some of the history and highlights of the past 25 years of international waterbird conservation under AEWA. The dedicated webpage also features a number of anniversary statements by people that have helped shape and guide the work of the treaty to date. For further details please visit: <https://www.unep-aewa.org/en/aewa-25th-anniversary>

**ANNEX I – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat Organisational structure**



## ANNEX II – UNEP/AEWA Secretariat Staff Composition



P = Professional Staff Category  
G = General Staff Category

As of 11 January 2021.