

REPORT OF THE 16th MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE¹

25-29 January 2021, Virtual conference format

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¹ Report finalised after consultation with the Technical Committee and other participants of TC16.

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Summary of TC16 Decisions

AGENDA ITEM		DECISIONS
Agenda item 3	Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme	The Meeting adopted the Agenda and the Work Programme with two additions to any other business.
Agenda item 4	Admission of Observers	The Committee agreed to admit the observers present and welcomed them to the meeting
Agenda item 9	Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of AEWA Waterbird Species	The proposed delineation of biogeographic populations of the Common Eider as presented in document AEWA/TC16.7 was approved for submission to the StC, after one modification was made.
Agenda item 10 a-c	Conservation Status Report (8th edition) and Amendments to the Agreement and its Annexes	<p><u>Agenda item 10 a:</u> The draft Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area as presented in document AEWA/TC16.8 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 10 b:</u> The draft Proposal for the Amendment of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement as presented in document AEWA/TC16.9 Rev.1 was approved for submission to MOP8.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 10 c:</u> The Draft Resolution on the Procedure for Submission of Proposals for Amendments to the Agreement as presented in document AEWA/TC16.10 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.</p>
Agenda item 11 a-c	AEWA International Species Action Plans and Management Plans	<p><u>Agenda item 11 a:</u> The draft AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider as presented in document AEWA/TC16.11 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8 with minor modifications.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 11 b:</u> The draft Revised Criteria for the Prioritisation of AEWA Populations for International Species Action-Planning including the annexed resulting revised priority lists, as presented in document AEWA/TC16.12 Rev.1 Ins.1, was approved for further use. The Summary of the Current Status of Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement as presented in document AEWA/TC16.13 was adopted with some amendments. The TC agreed to recommend extending the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for another three years to enable the revision of the plan. A three-year extension was also approved for the Bewick's Swan ISSAP. All remaining ISSAPs were approved to be extended for a 10-year</p>

		<p>period. The draft Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Management Plans as presented in document AEWA/TC16.14 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8. The draft Revised Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Action Plans as presented in document AEWA/TC16.15 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8. The draft Format for International Single Species Action Plan Conservation Briefs as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.16 was approved for further use with minor amendments.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 11 c:</u> The draft Resolution on the Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.17 Ins. 1 was approved for submission to MOP8 with one minor amendment.</p>
Agenda item 12	Seabirds	An ad-hoc TC seabird working group to be established to advance the seabird agenda in advance of MOP8.
Agenda item 13 a-b	Monitoring of the Flyway Site Network	<p><u>Agenda item 13 a:</u> Discussion needed between the AEWA Secretariat, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and Sovon on the practicalities of finalising the Draft Monitoring Framework for the AEWA Flyway Site Network as presented in document AEWA/TC16.19.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 13 b:</u> The draft Resolution on Inventory and Monitoring of the AEWA Flyway Site Network as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.20 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8 with one minor amendment.</p>
Agenda item 14 a-b	Sustainable Harvest	<p><u>Agenda item 14 a:</u> Establishing Criteria and a Priority List of Quarry Populations for Harvest Data Collection as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.22 was approved for submission to StC16 for adoption.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 14 b:</u> A TC ad-hoc working group will be convened on tasks 2.4, 4.9 and 4.10 of the TC workplan to develop the ToRs.</p>
Agenda item 15 a-b	Gaps in Information	<p><u>Agenda item 15 a:</u> The Overview of Knowledge Gaps and Needs Relevant for the Implementation of AEWA as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.25 Rev.1 requires further work, while still aiming for a submission to MOP8.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 15 b:</u> The draft Resolution on Addressing Priority Gaps in Information for the Implementation of AEWA as presented in document AEWA/TC16.26 will be revised and made available after the meeting.</p>
Agenda item 16 a-c	Waterbird Monitoring	<u>Agenda item 16 a:</u> The discussion on the Draft Monitoring Priorities for Waterbird Species and

		<p>Populations of AEWA as presented in document AEWA/TC16.28 will be continued on the TC workspace.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 16 b:</u> The draft Waterbird Monitoring Synergies with Other Frameworks as presented in document AEWA/TC16.29 requires further work, while still aiming for a submission to MOP8.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 16 c:</u> The draft Resolution on Further Development and Strengthening of Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.30 Ins 1. was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.</p>
Agenda item 17 a-g	Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement	<p><u>Agenda item 17 a:</u> The draft Revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 1: Guidelines on the Preparation of National Species Action Plans for Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.31 Rev.1 will be finalised for submission to StC16 after the Secretariat receiving all comments by 5 February.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 17 b:</u> The Revision of Conservation Guidelines No. 4 on the Management of Key Sites for Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.32 will be posted on the TC workspace for further discussion and will not be submitted to MOP8.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 17 c:</u> Managing Waterbird Disturbance: A Short Guide for Wetland Managers as presented in document AEWA/TC16.33 will be posted on the TC workspace for further input.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 17 d:</u> The draft Initial Guidance on Ecosystem Services in Relation to Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.34 will be posted on the TC workspace for further input.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 17 e:</u> The draft Guidance on Addressing the Risk of Accidental Shooting of Look-Alike Species of Waterbirds in the Agreement Area as presented in document AEWA/TC16.35 Ins.2 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 17 f:</u> Dissemination of Information Supplementary to Conservation Guidelines as presented in document AEWA/TC16.36 was approved for submission to StC16 for review and adoption.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 17 g:</u> The draft Resolution on the Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guidance as presented in document AEWA/TC16.37 Ins.1 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.</p>

Agenda item 18 a-g	Other Draft Documents and Resolutions for MOP8	<p><u>Agenda item 18 a:</u> The draft Resolution on AEWA's Past Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets and its Future Relevance to the Post-2020 Process as presented in document AEWA/TC16.40 was approved with two minor amendments.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 18 b:</u> AEWA's Contribution to the Aichi Targets 2011–2020 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.44 will be posted on the TC workspace for further development.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 18 c:</u> Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as presented in document AEWA/TC16.45 Rev.1 will be posted on the TC workspace for further development.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 18 d:</u> The Relevance of AEWA to Delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals: Opportunities That Are as presented in document AEWA/TC16.46 will be posted on the TC workspace for further development.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 18 e:</u> On the draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2021-2023 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.41 BLI will provide a proposal for new architecture for question 54 and question 3 will be discussed further via a call to be convened by the Secretariat. BLI will also provide a photo glossary to question 7. There will be a placeholder for question 19 until a conservation and management guidance is developed. Section 5.2 will stay as it is, but the resolution that will approve the template will indicate that in future iterations the TC should pay particular attention to reviewing and revising that section in view of the forthcoming MOP decisions on site network monitoring and reporting.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 18 f:</u> Ms Malsch will add the reflections from the discussion to the Discussion Paper on the Integration of Length of AEWA Membership into the Analysis of National Reports to MOP8 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.47 Corr.1 with a view to submitting it to MOP8 as an information document. The additional analysis based on length of AEWA membership will not be performed as it does not add value to the national report analysis.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 18 g:</u> The Format for the National Reporting Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa as presented in document AEWA/TC16.42 will be posted on the TC workspace for further comments.</p>
Agenda item 19 a-b	Other Issues	<p><u>Agenda item 19 a:</u> On the first topic regarding the development of a joint programme with the Ramsar Convention to promote Ramsar Site</p>

		<p>designation of relevant flyway sites, the Secretariat will talk through the practicalities with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and identify approaches on national level as well as timelines and capacities to advance the designation of critical sites as Ramsar Sites.</p> <p><u>Agenda item 19 b:</u> On the second topic regarding the exploration of the possibility of a joint strategic initiative with the World Heritage Convention, the Secretariat will consider the feasibility of pursuing an MoU with the World Heritage Center and the IUCN Unit on the World Heritage Convention. The Secretariat will draft a proposal on how to form a support network of AEWA Contracting Parties and partner organisations to ensure a coordinated effort on this process. Within that network, the implementation of the aspiration to designate serial sites from the critical site network under the World Heritage Convention will be jointly planned. The Secretariat will try to convene some preliminary meetings in order to discuss the practicalities and jointly do a reality check.</p>
Agenda item 28	TC Work Plan 2022-2024	The draft Work Plan for the AEWA Technical Committee 2022-2024 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.43 will be further refined and posted on the TC workspace before submission to StC16.

Agenda item 1. Opening

1. The Chair of the Technical Committee (TC), Ms Ruth Cromie, opened the meeting, welcoming all those present, noting that this was the largest TC so far. Ms Cromie thought it was excellent to have so many parties present as observers as well as various other UNEP bodies and other MEAs attending the meeting.

Agenda item 2. Welcome Addresses

2. Ms Cromie welcomed two new members to the Technical Committee. Mr Richard Hearn, representing IUCN as well as Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) in observer capacity, and Mr Ian Mitchell, one of the invited experts from JNCC in the UK, who had been brought on board for his seabird expertise.

3. Ms Cromie further welcomed the other invited experts Mr Sébastien Le Bel, Mr David Stroud and Mr Jesper Madsen.

4. Two TC members, Mr Philippe Karpe and Mr Pierre Defos du Rau had sent their apologies prior to the meeting saying that they were very sorry for not being able to attend.

5. The TC Chair shared with all those present that she was sorry to not be in the Czech Republic, where the meeting was originally planned to take place but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was hopeful to have a meeting there some time in the future.

6. Ms Cromie went on to mention the tragic loss of Paul Mafabi, former Director of Environment at the Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda, who was well known to many, especially those involved with the Ramsar Convention. She described him as a driving force of wetland conservation, always sharing his insights across the continent and well beyond. Another tragic loss was that of Robert Vagg, English Language Editor and Report Writer at the CMS Secretariat. Ms Cromie thought that he was, beyond his excellent editorial skills, a wise and delightful man.

7. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, also welcomed all those present and thought it was nice to see so many participants at least virtually. He said that the current COVID pandemic highlighted the links between environmental health, human health and wildlife health and added that it clearly showed the pertinence of the “One Health” approach. Finally, he said that he was impressed by the high number of registrations and wished everyone a productive meeting.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

8. Ms Cromie proposed to adopt the agenda and work programme and added that she was aware of two points to be discussed under any other business: the procedure for nominations for TC members and an update on MOP8.

9. Mr Sergey Dereliev, the Head of Science, Implementation and Compliance Unit at the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat, briefly ran through the workflow of the meeting and reminded all participants about two other important upcoming meetings: the 16th Meeting of the AEWA Standing Committee (StC16) and the 8th Meeting of the Parties (MOP8). Most of the documents discussed at this meeting were supposed to be submitted to the next StC for sign off and further submission to the next MOP.

10. Ms Cromie closed this agenda item by asking all those present to keep their interventions brief and to the point in the interest of time.

Decision: The Meeting adopted the Agenda (document AEWA/TC16.2 Rev.3) and the Work Programme (document AEWA/TC16.3 Rev.1) with two points added to item “Any other business”.

Agenda item 4. Admission of Observers

11. Introducing this agenda item, Ms Cromie said that she was glad to welcome four of the AEWA NGO partner organisations, all permanent observers to the Technical Committee: WWT, BirdLife International, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) and Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO).

12. Ms Cromie continued by welcoming the members of the StC: Ms Humbulani Mafumo, Ms Nadjiba Bendjedda as well as Ms Wilmar Remmelts. In addition, many representatives of observer parties were present at the meeting, including Armenia, Central African Republic, Denmark, the European

Commission, Germany, Ghana, Israel, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

13. Further observers included representatives from various other UNEP bodies, other MEAs and Flyway Initiatives.

Decision: The Committee agreed to admit the observers present and welcomed them to the meeting.

Agenda item 5. Report by the Chair

14. Ms Cromie introduced document AEWA/TC16.4 *Report of the Technical Committee to MOP8* noting that the point of this document was to deliver certain messages to the MOP and that she was seeking further input to the content.

15. After highlighting some of the key tasks of the TC work plan, Ms Cromie opened the floor for comments, upon which Mr Dereliev emphasised that the current report was indeed still a draft and that there would be more information going into the document, depending on how much progress the TC would make in the next months leading to the MOP. The AEWA Secretariat would revert to the full TC for feedback and input after the meeting, since there was nothing to add at this point.

Agenda item 6. Reports by the Regional Representatives

16. The attending regional representatives delivered progress reports to the meeting from their respective regions. The reports by the regional representatives on the implementation of AEWA in their respective regions are available in Appendix I. These include reports from the Central Europe, North and South-western Europe, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa, Western Africa and South-western Asia² regions.

17. Ms Lizanne Roxburgh started with presenting the report for Southern Africa after which there were no further comments or questions.

18. Following the presentation of the Northern Africa region by Mr Imad Cherkaoui, Mr Karen Aghababian, representative of Armenia, wondered how compatible the national legislation was with the AEWA provisions. Mr Cherkaoui responded that the regulations in Northern Africa were strong enough to comply with those of AEWA, but that there were many conflicts between conservationists and economists. He suggested that AEWA could find out from parties whether the national legislations were in line with AEWA's provisions.

19. There were no comments or questions after the presentations by Mr Peter Njoroge and Ms Khady Gueye who reported on the Eastern Africa and Western Africa regions respectively.

² This regional report is currently not included in the appendix. It will be added once it becomes available.

20. After giving his presentation on the report for the South-western Asia region, Mr Laith El-Moghrabi noted that the communication with the AEWa National Focal Points for compiling the information for the report had been very difficult, which some of the other regional representatives echoed.

21. Following the presentation of the Central Europe region by Mr Taulant Bino, there was a brief discussion on the planned development of an airport in a protected area in Albania, for which the assessment had not yet been completed.

22. Following the presentation of the North and South-western Europe region by Ms Cromie, Mr Aghababayan wanted to know how the EU process of banning the lead shot worked. Ms Cromie explained that the European Commission had planned the phasing out of the lead shot in two steps. The first step was to ban lead shot in wetlands (with the restriction recently adopted) and the second step, which would hopefully phase out lead in all waterbird habitats, would probably take another two years.

Agenda item 7. Reports by the Technical Committee representatives to other processes

23. Ms Cromie gave an update on the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group. She explained that there had been a decision at the last CMS COP to replace the Lead Task Group, which was within the larger group on preventing poisoning which reported to the Scientific Council, by an intergovernmental task force reporting directly to the COP. This would provide more profile to the issue. Ms Cromie informed all those present that terms of reference was being worked on for approval at the next meeting of the CMS StC.

24. Mr Cherkaoui gave an update on the CMS Task Force to Address Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT), in which he participated as an observer on behalf of AEWa at the meeting in 2019 in Rome, Italy. Mr Cherkaoui explained that the meeting aimed to assess the progress made, the first implementations and the MIKT programme of work from 2016 to 2020. He added that there was zero tolerance approach to illegal bird killing.

25. Mr Aghababayan told all those present that the issue of illegal bird killing in Armenia came from the hunters' poor knowledge of game birds. He wanted to know whether a study existed that distinguished between intentional and unintentional poaching. Mr Cherkaoui responded that there was a study in 2015 that assessed the scope and scale of illegal killing in the Mediterranean and that, unfortunately, most of the killings were intentional.

26. Mr Cy Griffin, representative of FACE, told everyone that he had attended the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) workshop last year, in which the illegal killing in Kazakhstan was assessed and that often hunters mistake the geese for other species upon which Ms Cromie emphasised that understanding motivation of illegal killing was key for addressing it.

Agenda item 8. Report by the Secretariat

27. Mr Jacques Trouvilliez, the AEWa Executive Secretary, introduced document AEWa/TC16.5 *Report of the Secretariat* informing everyone that Ms Evelyn Moloko, Coordinator of the African Initiative at the AEWa Secretariat, would be presenting document AEWa/TC16.6 *Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative* afterwards.

28. Mr Trouvilliez briefly went through the organisation and staffing of the Secretariat and the General Management, highlighting some of the main events in 2020 like the CMS COP13 and some of the task forces that AEWA staff were a member of.

29. Moving on to the topic of fundraising, Mr Trouvilliez thanked those countries that provided voluntary contributions for specific projects, some of these being the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP), the implementation of the Plan of Action for Africa (PoAA) and the production of documents for MOP8. He was also appreciative of the in-kind contributions that some countries had made.

30. Mr Trouvilliez went on to inform all those present about the current status of the Implementation Review Process (IRP) cases, one of which had been closed and five of which were new cases since the last TC meeting.

31. Further important topics were the new restriction adopted by the EU in December 2020 that is phasing out the use of lead shot in wetlands as well as the Climate Resilient Flyway project, which was still in progress.

32. Finally, Mr Trouvilliez highlighted some of the successful projects and campaigns implemented by the CMS/AEWA joint Communication, Information Management and Outreach Unit, for example the online national reporting and the World Migratory Bird Day.

33. With that, Mr Trouvilliez opened the floor for comments and questions. Mr Richard Hearn, representative of IUCN and WWT, thought it would be beneficial to extend the scope of recognition to non-party stakeholders. He also wondered whether it would be possible to add to the report the progress made on the active IRPs. Mr Trouvilliez responded that it was sometimes difficult to obtain the information on in-kind contributions, but that a form for that purpose would be introduced on the AEWA website. Furthermore, Mr Trouvilliez agreed to add a progress report on the open IRPs.

34. Introducing AEWA/TC16.6 *Report on the Implementation of the African Initiative*, Ms Moloko briefly explained that the African Initiative (AI) had three main units: the Coordination Unit, the Technical Support Unit and Sub-Regional Focal Point Coordinators.

35. Ms Moloko went on to give all those present an overview on the progress of the national reporting on the implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa to MOP8 and species conservation and monitoring.

36. She furthermore reported on the finalisation and administration of the AEWA Small Grants Fund, capacity building, communication, education and public awareness as well as on the recruitment of new Contracting Parties and on various partnerships.

Agenda item 9. Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of AEWA Waterbird Species

37. Introducing Document AEWA/TC16.7 *Delineation of Biogeographic Populations of the Common Eider (Somateria mollissima)*, Ms Mikander noted that the TC would be requested to take a decision

on the two new issues that had emerged during the action planning meeting on the Common Eider in 2020 in relation to population delineation.

38. The first proposal was to include the Orkney Island Common Eiders as part of the Baltic, North & Celtic Seas population (*Somateria m. mollissima*). The second proposal was to list the East Greenland Common Eider population (*Somateria m. borealis*) on AEWA Table 1.

39. After some comments were made about the proposed listing of populations in Table 1, Mr Dereliev clarified that there was a typo, and that the East Greenland population of the Common Eider was meant to be proposed for listing in category 4 of column A rather than in category 1c. He furthermore clarified that the Common Eider was a Near Threatened species and therefore this population qualified for category 4 of column A. This would be revised accordingly in the proposal for revision of Table 1.

40. Since there were no further comments on the document, Ms Cromie concluded that the document was approved and could be submitted to the StC after the corrections were made.

Decision: The proposed delineation of biogeographic populations of the Common Eider as presented in document AEWA/TC16.7 was approved for submission to the StC, after one modification was made.

Agenda item 10a-c. Conservation Status Report (8th edition) and Amendments to the Agreement and its Annexes

a)

41. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.8 *Draft Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area* Mr Szabolcs Nagy, representative of Wetlands International, noted that the TC was expected to review and approve the draft for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

42. Following some discussions, Mr Nagy thought it would be useful to seek further guidance from the TC members through the TC workspace on how to improve the consultation process in future. For now, Ms Cromie concluded that the document could go forward to the upcoming StC and MOP.

b)

43. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.9 Rev.1 *Draft Proposal for the Amendment of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement* Mr Dereliev noted that the TC would be requested to review and approve the proposed amendments to Table 1 of AEWA's Annex 3. Once approved, the Secretariat would identify a Contracting Party to submit this proposal to MOP8 in line with Article X of the Agreement.

44. Following an extensive discussion on Sweden's and the Netherlands' proposal to include the Swedish Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) population to the Agreement, Mr Dereliev emphasised that the issue of the Swedish LWfG population was a special case and that the request would need to go through a separate process in the respective International Species Working Group. The decision was not to be taken by the TC.

45. Mr Dereliev further outlined the steps of the process for such an amendment. Article X of the Agreement stated that each party could submit a proposal for amendment within the given timeline, which was 150 days ahead of the MOP.

46. Ms Cromie finally thanked everyone for their input and concluded that the document has been approved by the TC for submission to MOP8.

c)

47. Mr Dereliev continued, by introducing document AEWA/TC16.10 *Draft Resolution on the Procedure for Submission of Proposals for Amendments to the Agreement*, explaining that it would be submitted to StC16 for consideration before it would have been submitted to MOP8.

48. Mr Øystein Størkersen, representative of Norway, was worried about a potential conflict with the text of the Agreement due to another mandate that had already been ratified by the Parties, which could be contradicting. Mr Dereliev reassured that consultations had been made internally within the TC and that none of the lawyers had identified an actual clash of procedure or mandates.

49. As no further comments were made, Ms Cromie concluded that the document was adopted and could be submitted to StC16 and MOP8.

Decisions:

Agenda item 10 a: The draft Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area as presented in document AEWA/TC16.8 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Agenda item 10 b: The draft Proposal for the Amendment of Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Agreement as presented in document AEWA/TC16.9 Rev.1 was approved for submission to MOP8.

Agenda item 10 c: The Draft Resolution on the Procedure for Submission of Proposals for Amendments to the Agreement as presented in document AEWA/TC16.10 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Agenda item 11a-c. AEWA International Species Action Plans and Management Plans

a)

50. All documents but one under this agenda item were introduced by Ms Mikander. One was introduced by Ms Eva Meyers, Coordinator of the European Goose Management Platform at the AEWA Secretariat.

51. Ms Mikander began by introducing document AEWA/TC16.11 *Draft AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider* explaining that it was the only new action plan that had been developed in the current triennium. The TC would be requested to provisionally review and approve the draft for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

52. Ms Mikander informed all those present that the action plan was still pending the formal consultation with the Range States and that there may still be some changes. However, due to the extensive consultations beforehand no major changes would be expected.

53. After some brief discussions it was agreed that the document would be submitted to StC16 and MOP8 with some minor modifications.

b)

54. Moving on to documents AEWA/TC16.12 Rev.1 *Draft Revised Criteria for the Prioritisation of AEWA Populations for International Species Action-Planning* and AEWA/TC16.48 *Draft Revised Criteria for the Prioritisation of AEWA Populations for International Species Management-Planning* also introduced by Ms Mikander, document AEWA/TC16.12 Rev.1 was discussed first. Here the TC was requested to review and approve the proposed revised criteria and methodology for prioritising AEWA-listed populations for the development of International Species Action Plans, as well as the resulting proposed priority 1-3 lists of populations, to guide the development of International Single Species Action Plans in the period 2022-2024.

55. Based on the following discussion, Mr Dereliev suggested to tweak the language of the document to make the priorities clearer, then to post it on the TC webpage as an in-session document to be examined by an ad-hoc group and revert to it later during the meeting. Following inputs from the ad-hoc group, the in-session document AEWA/TC16.12 Rev.1 Ins.1 and its annex were both accepted later in the meeting after Ms Mikander had introduced the changes made.

56. Ms Mikander continued by explaining that for document AEWA/TC16.48 the TC was requested to review and approve the proposed revised criteria and methodology for prioritising AEWA-listed populations for the development of International Species Management Plans, as well as the resulting proposed priority 1 and 2 lists of populations, to guide the development of International Single Species Management Plans in the period 2022-2024, subject to the application of additional filters and criteria once relevant information became available.

57. After some brief discussions, Ms Cromie concluded that the document was approved for further use.

58. Document AEWA/TC16.13 *Summary of the Current Status of Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement* was introduced by Ms Mikander.

59. Following some discussions, the TC adopted the amended procedure for extension, revision or retirement to also include management plans adopted under the agreement. Based on the availability of new information regarding the genetics of the LWfG shared by Sweden, the TC agreed to recommend extending the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for another three years to enable the revision of the plan. A three-year extension was also approved for the Bewick's Swan ISSAP. All remaining ISSAPs were approved to be extended for a 10-year period.

60. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.14 *Draft Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Management Plans*, Ms Meyers explained that the TC was requested to review the proposed draft format for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Management Plans, make amendments, if applicable, and adopt the Format and Guidance for submission to StC16 and MOP8 for subsequent approval for use.

61. After the floor was opened for comments, Mr Njisuh commended Ms Meyers on the well-written document and thought it was important to ensure greater synergies among the MEAs. Consultations of the various stakeholders should be a priority. Mr Dereliev agreed and told all those present that those impacted by such a process were always consulted. This practice would be maintained in future.

62. Ms Cromie echoed Mr Njisuh's opinion that the document was well-written and well thought through. The document was adopted for further submission to StC16 and MOP8.

63. Document AEWA/TC16.15 *Draft Revised Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Action Plans* was again introduced by Ms Mikander. She noted that the TC was requested to review the proposed changes to the draft format for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Action Plans, make amendments if applicable, and to adopt the revised Format and Guidance for submission to StC16 and MOP8 for subsequent approval for use.

64. After a brief intervention by Mr Theo Verstrael, representative of the Netherlands, on including a reference about a standardised method on how to identify the Favorable Reference Values (FRVs), Ms Mikander noted that a reference had already been added, but that the Secretariat was working together with the European Commission on a more detailed guidance.

65. As there were no further comments, Ms Cromie concluded that the document was accepted and would go forward to StC16 and MOP8.

66. Introducing document AEWA/TC 16.16 *Draft Format for International Single Species Action Plan Conservation Briefs* Ms Mikander noted that the TC was requested to review the draft format for conservation briefs, make amendments as necessary and approve it for further use and emphasised that this was a TC and not a MOP document.

67. Following some brief discussions on how the document could be made clearer by for example adding a summary highlighting the main issues or a flowchart, Ms Cromie concluded that the format was adopted with some minor tweaks.

c)

68. Moving on, the TC was requested to review and agree on document AEWA/TC 16.17 *Draft Resolution on the Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans*.

69. After Ms Mikander had introduced the document, Ms Nicola Crockford, representative of BirdLife International, asked whether the TC members were interested to see a draft of the (non-AEWA) International (East Atlantic) Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) compiled by RSPB under an EU Life-funded project, since providing comments would still be possible until 5 March.

70. She furthermore thought it was great to see the progress made on some plans, but that the level of implementation BirdLife International would have liked to see had not been met. Ms Crockford suggested to convene a group that could look into some ways to ensure action plans were better implemented, since the coordinators were often isolated. Mr Hearn agreed and thought a simple mechanism for connecting coordinators online would be beneficial.

71. After some further discussions, Ms Mikander proposed to make some changes in the operative part of the document, post it on the TC webpage as an in-session document and revert to it later during the meeting. When the revised document was introduced there was a brief discussion on the word 'auspices', which some of the Contracting Parties thought was not suitable. It was agreed to remove the word from all action plans for consistency purposes.

72. With that, all those present agreed that the in-session document AEWA/TC 16.17 Ins.1 could be submitted to MOP8.

Decisions:

Agenda item 11 a: The draft AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Common Eider as presented in document AEWA/TC16.11 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8 with minor modifications.

Agenda item 11 b: The draft Revised Criteria for the Prioritisation of AEWA Populations for International Species Action-Planning including the annexed resulting revised priority lists, as

presented in document AEWA/TC16.12 Rev.1 Ins.1, was approved for further use. The Summary of the Current Status of Species Action and Management Plan Production and Coordination with Recommendations to MOP for Extension, Revision or Retirement as presented in document AEWA/TC16.13 was adopted with some amendments. The TC agreed to recommend extending the LWfG International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for another three years to enable the revision of the plan. A three-year extension was also approved for the Bewick's Swan ISSAP. All remaining ISSAPs were approved to be extended for a 10-year period. The draft Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Management Plans as presented in document AEWA/TC16.14 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8. The draft Revised Format and Guidelines for AEWA International Single and Multi-Species Action Plans as presented in document AEWA/TC16.15 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8. The draft Format for International Single Species Action Plan Conservation Briefs as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.16 was approved for further use with minor amendments.

Agenda item 11 c: The draft Resolution on the Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.17 Ins. 1 was approved for submission to MOP8 with one minor amendment.

Agenda item 12. Seabirds

73. As the TC's Seabird Expert, Mr Ian Mitchell was invited to introduce document AEWA/TC 16.18 *Update on the Implementation and Further Prioritisation of Seabird Related Activities Under AEWA*.

74. The TC was requested to take note of the seabird-related activities undertaken during this triennium as well as the key takeaways from those, and was invited to consider whether there was scope for producing any additional, more detailed prioritisation and guidance within the coming months to be presented to MOP8.

75. Ms Crockford thought that AEWA could add value to the seabird agenda and thought it may be useful to establish a seabird working group.

76. Ms Cromie agreed and emphasised that it was important to have the appropriate representatives with sufficient geographical and institutional representation.

Decision: An ad-hoc TC seabird working group to be established to advance the seabird agenda in advance of MOP8.

Agenda item 13a-b. Monitoring of the Flyway Site Network

a)

77. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.19 *Draft Monitoring Framework for the AEWA Flyway Site Network*, Mr Nagy explained that the TC would be requested to review the proposed approach to site monitoring and approve the document.

78. Mr Nagy summarised the following extensive discussions. He noted that it was clear that a way would need to be found to build on existing reporting and that the Ramsar Convention was willing to cooperate. He said that one of the main blockages was the use of different categories for threats, conservation actions etc. and concluded that there needed to be a standardisation among the MEAs, but that this was beyond the scope of the contractors. Mr Nagy suggested to come up with a proposal that would simplify some of the recommendations made.

79. The second phase would be about developing a concept for data flow management. Mr Nagy emphasised that it was fundamental to agree on this.

80. Mr Dereliev agreed that Mr Nagy's proposal was a good way forward, but that it was not possible to come to a solution within the framework of this meeting. He suggested to have a discussion between the AEWA Secretariat, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and Sovon on the practicalities of finalising the document, with potential involvement of the StC.

b)

81. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce document AEWA/TC 16.20 *Draft Resolution on Inventory and Monitoring of the AEWA Flyway Site Network* requesting the TC to review and agree on it.

82. Mr Danny Heptinstall, representative of the United Kingdom, asked the Secretariat to explain what was meant by "examined and accepted" in preambular paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, as he thought "accept" may not be a suitable word in this context. Mr Dereliev explained that the Secretariat tried to examine the comprehensiveness with all national reports received and that it would be similar in the case of the site inventories. This was to ensure the quality of the inventories. Mr Dereliev suggested that Mr Heptinstall could propose an alternative wording.

83. With that amendment the document was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Decisions:

Agenda item 13 a: Discussion needed between the AEWA Secretariat, Wetlands International, BirdLife International and Sovon on the practicalities of finalising the Draft Monitoring Framework for the AEWA Flyway Site Network as presented in document AEWA/TC16.19.

Agenda item 13 b: The draft Resolution on Inventory and Monitoring of the AEWA Flyway Site Network as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.20 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8 with one minor amendment.

Agenda item 14a-b. Sustainable Harvest

a)

84. Mr Jesper Madsen introduced document AEWA/TC 16.22 *Establishing Criteria and a Priority List of Quarry Populations for Harvest Data Collection* requesting the TC to first review and approve the draft.

85. Following a brief discussion, it was decided that the document could be submitted to StC16 for adoption.

b)

86. The TC was then requested to provide guidance on the way to advance the implementation of some tasks of the TC workplan. These were tasks 2.4, 4.9 and 4.10.

87. After many contributions and ideas, it became evident that a separate meeting on these tasks would have to be convened to continue the discussions and to develop the three ToRs. Mr Dereliev asked all those interested to join an ad-hoc group on the topic to indicate this via an email to the Secretariat.

Decisions:

Agenda item 14 a: Establishing Criteria and a Priority List of Quarry Populations for Harvest Data Collection as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.22 was approved for submission to StC16 for adoption.

Agenda item 14 b: A TC ad-hoc working group will be convened on tasks 2.4, 4.9 and 4.10 of the TC workplan to develop the ToRs.

Agenda item 15a-b. Gaps in Information

a)

88. Introducing document AEWA/TC 16.25 Rev.1 *Overview of Knowledge Gaps and Needs Relevant for the Implementation of AEWA*, Mr Nagy requested the TC to review the draft overview and provide further input and direction for its completion as well as discuss and agree on the next steps for completing task 5.1 of the workplan.

89. Following some discussions, Mr Dereliev said that all the input would be added to the spreadsheet and that the work would be continued in the coming weeks. The aim was still to pursue the idea of submitting the draft and the resolution to MOP8.

b)

90. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/TC16.26 *Draft Resolution on Addressing Priority Gaps in Information for the Implementation of AEWA* explaining that it was a placeholder and a very basic document. It currently only reflected references to the AEWA Strategic Plan. The operative paragraphs suggested an endorsement of the overview of the gaps.

91. Since the document was still premature and there were no comments on it, Mr Dereliev said that a revised version together with the products from the other steps in the process would be made available after the meeting.

Decisions:

Agenda item 15 a: The Overview of Knowledge Gaps and Needs Relevant for the Implementation of AEWA as presented in document AEWA/TC 16.25 Rev.1 requires further work, while still aiming for a submission to MOP8.

Agenda item 15 b: The draft Resolution on Addressing Priority Gaps in Information for the Implementation of AEWA as presented in document AEWA/TC16.26 will be revised and made available after the meeting.

Agenda item 16a-c. Waterbird Monitoring

a)

92. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.28 *Draft Monitoring Priorities for Waterbird Species and Populations of AEWA*, Mr Nagy noted that the TC was requested to agree on the way to further develop this document based on the feedback received from the consultative meeting on 22 January 2021.

93. Based on the following discussions, Ms Cromie concluded that the discussion would continue on the TC workspace.

b)

94. Mr Nagy went on to introduce document AEWA/TC16.29 *Draft Waterbird Monitoring Synergies with Other Frameworks*, noting that the TC was requested to review the draft assessment and approve it for submission to the other identified frameworks, with or without additions and amendments. Once feedback had been received and the document had been revised, it would be again circulated to the TC for final approval before submission to the StC and the MOP.

95. Following a few brief comments, Mr Nagy pointed out that the document itself was not as important as the next stage. It was the Secretariat's task to consult the other frameworks and agree on a blueprint on a collaboration on development of synergies and address data flow. Mr Dereliev agreed that the Secretariat would lead on the consultations and added that the document needed to be advanced further outlining clear suggestions to the frameworks on how to tackle synergies. He hoped that the document could be ready within the next month and could be submitted to the StC for submission to MOP.

c)

96. Mr Dereliev continued by introducing document AEWA/TC16.30 *Draft Resolution on Further Development and Strengthening of Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds* explaining that the TC was requested to review and provide advice and comments for its finalisation.

97. Upon a suggestion for new text by Mr Hearn, Ms Cromie proposed to circulate an in-session version with the suggested text and revert to it later during the meeting.

98. The in-session document AEWA/TC16.30 Ins.1 was accepted later in the meeting, after Mr Dereliev introduced the changes made.

Decisions:

Agenda item 16 a: The discussion on the Draft Monitoring Priorities for Waterbird Species and Populations of AEWA as presented in document AEWA/TC16.28 will be continued on the TC workspace.

Agenda item 16 b: The draft Waterbird Monitoring Synergies with Other Frameworks as presented in document AEWA/TC16.29 requires further work, while still aiming for a submission to MOP8.

Agenda item 16 c: The draft Resolution on Further Development and Strengthening of Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.30 Ins 1. was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Agenda item 17a-g. Guidance on Implementation of the Agreement

a)

99. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.31 Rev.1 *Draft Revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 1: Guidelines on the Preparation of National Species Action Plans for Migratory Waterbirds* Ms Mikander noted that the TC was requested to review the draft revised Guidelines and provide input so that the Guidelines could be further amended and submitted for approval to StC16 for submission to MOP8 for adoption.

100. Ms Mikander explained that some elements of the guidelines were still there, but that most of the guidelines had been revamped.

101. Following some brief interventions, Ms Cromie concluded that all comments were to be passed on to Ms Mikander by latest 5 February, as the document would need to be finalised for submission to StC16.

b)

102. Mr Stroud went on to introduce document AEWA/TC16.32 *Revision of Conservation Guidelines No. 4 on the Management of Key Sites for Migratory Waterbirds* noting that the TC was requested to consider the issues outlined in the document and the specific comments on the text of the Guidelines and agree on the actions to be undertaken as well as their modalities.

103. After a discussion, Ms Cromie stated that the general sense seemed to be that the document should not go forward to the MOP, since it was not as advanced as others. Mr Stroud volunteered to post some questions on the TC workspace to kick off discussions to define the scope of work for implementation post-MOP8.

c)

104. Moving on, Mr Stroud introduced document AEWA/TC16.33 *Managing Waterbird Disturbance: A Short Guide for Wetland Managers*.

105. After some brief discussions, Ms Cromie concluded that the document would again be posted on the TC workspace with a view to get further input and particularly the different regions' perspectives.

d)

106. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.34 *Draft Initial Guidance on Ecosystem Services in Relation to Migratory Waterbirds* Mr Stroud noted that the TC was requested to review the draft and make additions or amendments, as necessary, and approve it for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

107. The conclusion here was again to post the document on the TC workspace to determine the issues that had been missed and how the services could be used in a policy context.

e)

108. Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/TC16.35 *Draft Guidance on Addressing the Risk of Accidental Shooting of Look-Alike Species of Waterbirds in the Agreement Area* and said that the TC was requested to review the draft and make additions or amendments, as necessary, and approve it for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

109. After some discussion, Mr Dereliev invited those participants who had made suggestions on the text of the recommended actions to submit these via email so he could compile them into an in-session document for consideration.

110. Later in the meeting Mr Dereliev introduced the in-session document AEWA/TC16.35 Ins.1 explaining that he had incorporated all suggestions that had been received including comments, additions, and amendments. Mr Dereliev proposed to the meeting participants to take note of the comments and focus on the additions and amendments.

111. After further extensive discussions about the suggested changes, an ad-hoc group was established to look into the in-session version of the document more closely. Following the discussion of the ad-hoc group another in-session document (AEWA/TC16.35 Ins.2) was developed and circulated.

112. Later in the meeting the in-session document AEWA/TC16.35 Ins.2 was agreed upon.

f)

113. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.36 *Dissemination of Information Supplementary to Conservation Guidelines*, Mr Stroud noted that the TC was requested to review the proposed approach, make amendments, as necessary, and agree on its submission to StC16 for review and adoption.

114. Since the document had already been discussed, there were no further comments and was therefore approved for submission to StC16.

g)

115. Mr Dereliev went on to introduce Document AEWA/TC16.37 *Draft Resolution on the Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guidance* noting that point 1b would be removed from the resolution, as the revised Conservation Guidelines No.4 would not be finalised by MOP8.

116. Ms Roxburgh wondered whether it would be possible for the governments of the Contracting Parties to promote and publicise Conservation Guidelines within their countries, as they were in a much better position than the Secretariat to do so at the national level.

117. Mr Dereliev agreed to make that addition to the wording of the resolution and would circulate an in-session version of the document.

118. The in-session document AEWA/TC16.37 Ins.1 was adopted for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Decisions:

Agenda item 17 a: The draft Revised AEWA Conservation Guidelines No. 1: Guidelines on the Preparation of National Species Action Plans for Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.31 Rev.1 will be finalised for submission to StC16 after the Secretariat receiving all comments by 5 February.

Agenda item 17 b: The Revision of Conservation Guidelines No. 4 on the Management of Key Sites for Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.32 will be posted on the TC workspace for further discussion and will not be submitted to MOP8.

Agenda item 17 c: Managing Waterbird Disturbance: A Short Guide for Wetland Managers as presented in document AEWA/TC16.33 will be posted on the TC workspace for further input.

Agenda item 17 d: The draft Initial Guidance on Ecosystem Services in Relation to Migratory Waterbirds as presented in document AEWA/TC16.34 will be posted on the TC workspace for further input.

Agenda item 17 e: The draft Guidance on Addressing the Risk of Accidental Shooting of Look-Alike Species of Waterbirds in the Agreement Area as presented in document AEWA/TC16.35 Ins.2 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Agenda item 17 f: Dissemination of Information Supplementary to Conservation Guidelines as presented in document AEWA/TC16.36 was approved for submission to StC16 for review and adoption.

Agenda item 17 g: The draft Resolution on the Revision and Adoption of Conservation Guidance as presented in document AEWA/TC16.37 Ins.1 was approved for submission to StC16 and MOP8.

Agenda item 18a-g. Other Draft Documents and Resolutions for MOP8**a)**

119. Mr Stroud introduced document AEWA/TC16.40 *Draft Resolution on AEWA's Past Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets and its Future Relevance to the Post-2020 Process*.

120. After the floor was opened for comments, Ms Crockford suggested to include a reference to the CMS COP resolution related to the Gandhinagar Declaration and the post 2020 framework in the preamble.

121. Furthermore, Mr Verstrael thought that natural environment in a broader sense should be added to the final line of the resolution.

With these two amendments the document was approved.

123. Mr Dereliev explained that the intention was, for the following cluster of documents (16.44-16.46), once all the material was compiled, to create a more succinct popular version.

b)

124. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.44 *AEWA's Contribution to the Aichi Targets 2011–2020*, Mr Stroud noted that it was a retrospective analysis which built on previous considerations.

125. Mr Stroud briefly outlined the structure of the document and then opened the floor for comments.

126. Since there were no comments at this stage and this was not a document that needed to be finalised at this meeting, Mr Stroud said that he was happy to accept comments, through the TC workspace, in the weeks following the meeting to develop the document further.

c)

127. Mr Stroud moved on to introduce document AEWA/TC16.45 Rev.1 *Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework* explaining that the focus was on the broader themes listed on page three of the document.

128. After some comments were made, Mr Stroud noted that there was more work to do on this document and suggested to post it on the TC workspace for further development.

d)

129. Introducing document AEWA/TC16.46 *The Relevance of AEWA to Delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals: Opportunities That Are*, Mr Stroud said that it would be helpful to receive some case studies and after discussions noted that again more work needed to be done on the document. It would be posted on the TC workspace for further comments.

e)

130. Next, Mr Dereliev introduced document AEWA/TC16.41 *Draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2021-2023*, noting that the purpose of the document was for reporting to the MOP in 2024. He explained that the amendments mainly concerned those reporting items that stemmed out of the Strategic Plan with respect to the MOP9 timeline.

131. Following some interventions, Mr Dereliev recapped that BLI would provide a proposal for new architecture for question 54 and that question 3 would also need to be discussed further via a call to be convened by the Secretariat. The European Commission would also need to be involved in the discussion on question 3.

132. Furthermore, Mr Dereliev requested decisions on three other issues. The TC agreed that BLI would provide a photo glossary to question 7. It also agreed to a placeholder for question 19 until a conservation and management guidance was developed. Finally, it was agreed that section 5.2 would stay as it was, but that the resolution that would approve the template would indicate that in future iterations the TC should pay particular attention to reviewing and revising that section in view of the forthcoming MOP decisions on site network monitoring and reporting.

f)

133. Ms Kelly Malsch, representative of UNEP/WCMC, introduced document AEWA/TC16.47 Corr.1 *Discussion Paper on the Integration of Length of AEWA Membership into the Analysis of National Reports to MOP8* and informed everyone that this document would be submitted to the MOP as an information document.

134. Following some interventions, Ms Cromie concluded that the overall sense was that such an analysis would not add value to the national report analysis. Mr Dereliev added, that it would be useful for Ms Malsch to add the reflections from this discussion to the document.

g)

135. Ms Moloko introduced document AEWA/TC16.42 *Format for the National Reporting Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa* noting that for the first time there was a clear mandate for preparing a module for reporting on the PoAA.

136. Following some brief comments, Ms Cromie concluded that the document along with some specific questions for the TC's African Regional Representatives, who were not present during this part of the meeting, would be posted on the TC workspace.

Decisions:

Agenda item 18 a: The draft Resolution on AEWA's Past Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets and its Future Relevance to the Post-2020 Process as presented in document AEWA/TC16.40 was approved with two minor amendments.

Agenda item 18 b: AEWA's Contribution to the Aichi Targets 2011–2020 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.44 will be posted on the TC workspace for further development.

Agenda item 18 c: Opportunities for AEWA to Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as presented in document AEWA/TC16.45 Rev.1 will be posted on the TC workspace for further development.

Agenda item 18 d: The Relevance of AEWA to Delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals: Opportunities That Are as presented in document AEWA/TC16.46 will be posted on the TC workspace for further development.

Agenda item 18 e: On the draft Format for National Reports on the Implementation of AEWA 2021-2023 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.41 BLI will provide a proposal for new architecture for question 54 and question 3 will be discussed further via a call to be convened by the Secretariat. BLI will also provide a photo glossary to question 7. There will be a placeholder for question 19 until a conservation and management guidance is developed. Section 5.2 will stay as it is, but the resolution that will approve the template will indicate that in future iterations the TC should pay particular attention to reviewing and revising that section in view of the forthcoming MOP decisions on site network monitoring and reporting.

Agenda item 18 f: Ms Malsch will add the reflections from the discussion to the Discussion Paper on the Integration of Length of AEWA Membership into the Analysis of National Reports to MOP8 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.47 Corr.1 with a view to submitting it to MOP8 as an information document. The additional analysis based on length of AEWA membership will not be performed as it does not add value to the national report analysis.

Agenda item 18 g: The Format for the National Reporting Module on the Implementation of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa as presented in document AEWA/TC16.42 will be posted on the TC workspace for further comments.

Agenda item 19a-b. Other Issues

a)

137. The first topic under this agenda item was about developing a joint programme with the Ramsar Convention to promote Ramsar Site designation of relevant flyway sites.

138. Following a brainstorming session proving considerable support for developing the above-mentioned joint programme, Mr Dereliev noted that there was already a well-established cooperation between the two Secretariats and that a lot of work that was needed to support the process going forward has already been done.

139. In outlining the next steps, Mr Dereliev said that the Secretariat would talk through the practicalities with the Ramsar Secretariat and identify approaches on the national level as to where the priorities were. Furthermore, timelines and capacities would need to be identified to advance the designation of sites as comprehensively as possible.

b)

140. The second topic under this agenda item was about exploring the possibility of a joint strategic initiative with the World Heritage Convention. Mr Dereliev explained that the focus of the discussion should be on what should be achieved and how and whether there were volunteers to support the Secretariat in its efforts.

141. Following an intense exchange of ideas, Mr Dereliev concluded that it would be useful to establish a support network of AEWA Contracting Parties and partner organisations to ensure a coordinated effort on this process. Furthermore, the Secretariat would consider the feasibility of pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Heritage Center and the IUCN Unit on the World Heritage Convention after concluding on the establishment of a support network. The Secretariat would draft a proposal after approaching certain organisations and countries on how to form the support network. Within that network, the implementation of the aspiration to designate serial sites from the critical site network under the World Heritage Convention would be jointly planned. The Secretariat would try to convene some preliminary meetings in order to discuss the practicalities and jointly do a reality check.

Decisions:

Agenda item 19 a: On the first topic regarding the development of a joint programme with the Ramsar Convention to promote Ramsar Site designation of relevant flyway sites, the Secretariat will talk through the practicalities with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and identify approaches on national level as well as timelines and capacities to advance the designation of critical sites as Ramsar Sites.

Agenda item 19 b: On the second topic regarding the exploration of the possibility of a joint strategic initiative with the World Heritage Convention, the Secretariat will consider the feasibility of pursuing an MoU with the World Heritage Center and the IUCN Unit on the World Heritage Convention. The Secretariat will draft a proposal on how to form a support network of AEWA Contracting Parties and partner organisations to ensure a coordinated effort on this process. Within that network, the implementation of the aspiration to designate serial sites from the critical site network under the World Heritage Convention will be jointly planned. The Secretariat will try to convene some preliminary meetings in order to discuss the practicalities and jointly do a reality check.

Agenda item 20. TC Working Group 1 (Field of Application)

142. Ms Mikander confirmed that all tasks under this working group had been completed.

Agenda item 21. TC Working Group 2 (Species Conservation)

143. Under this working group there were tasks that have already been completed, tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8 and would require further work as well as tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium. The overview below covers only the latter two categories.

Tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8:

- 2.3. ISSAP Conservation Briefs

Tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium:

- 2.1. Priority list for species action and management planning
- 2.2. Conservation and management guidance for AEWA populations
- 2.4. Sustainable harvests and the socio-economic importance of waterbirds
- 2.5. Priorities for seabird conservation

Agenda item 22. TC Working Group 3 (Habitat Conservation)

144. Under this working group there were tasks that have already been completed, tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8 and would require further work as well as tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium. The overview below covers only the latter two categories.

Tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8:

- 3.2. Site monitoring framework

Tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium:

- 3.3. Status of principal waterbird habitats + 3.5. Habitat conservation action plan (tasks were merged)
- 3.4 Sea-level rise impact

- 3.6. Socio-economic importance of waterbirds

Agenda item 23. TC Working Group 4 (Management of Human Activities)

145. Under this working group there were tasks that have been completed, tasks that did not require immediate TC action, tasks that have been deleted, tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8 and would require further work as well as tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium. The overview below covers only the latter two categories.

Tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8:

- 4.1. Processes contributing to tackling of the four causes of unnecessary additional mortality and other threats
- 4.2. Management of disturbance
- 4.11. Sustainable ecotourism

Tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium:

- 4.9. Harvest data collation (partially)
- 4.10. Sustainability of harvest

Agenda item 24. TC Working Group 5 (Research and Monitoring)

146. Mr Dereliev confirmed that all tasks under this working group were expected to be delivered by MOP8.

Agenda item 25. TC Working Group 6 (Education and Information)

147. Under this working group most tasks were linked to various tasks under the other working groups.

148. Ms Olesya Petrovych, the TC's expert on CEPA-related issues, and Mr Florian Keil, Communication Officer at the AEWA Secretariat, led a discussion on the identification of priority issues for communication and the development of key messages.

149. Ms Cromie concluded that the discussions would continue on the TC workspace on where the priorities were for the TC products.

Agenda item 26. TC Working Group 7 (Implementation)

150. Under this working group there were tasks that have been completed, tasks that did not require immediate TC action, tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8 and would require further work as well as tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium. The overview below covers only the latter two categories.

Tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8:

- 7.1. Conservation Status Review 8
- 7.3. Review and reformatting of existing Conservation Guidelines (partial)
- 7.5. Management plan format
- 7.6. Guidance on waterbirds as ecosystem services
- 7.8. Revision and update of Conservation Guidelines (partial)

Tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium:

- 7.2. Other international reviews
- 7.4. Non-native species risk assessment

Agenda item 27. TC Working Group 8 (Strategic, Reporting, Emerging and other Issues)

151. Under this working group there were tasks that have been completed, tasks that did not require immediate TC action, tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8 and would require further work as well as tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium. The overview below covers only the latter two categories.

Tasks that were expected to be delivered by MOP8:

- 8.3. Monitoring of implementation of the Strategic Plan and the PoAA (2019-2027)
- 8.4. Harmonisation of reporting
- 8.5. AEWA's contribution to relevant global frameworks

Tasks that would be brought forward to the next triennium:

- 8.8. Periodicity of the sessions of the MOP

Agenda item 28. TC Work Plan 2022-2024

152. Mr Dereliev introduced the agenda item by explaining that document AEWA/TC16.43 *Draft Work Plan for the AEWA Technical Committee 2022-2024* would constitute appendix 2 to the MOP8 draft resolution on institutional arrangements for the TC.

153. Mr Dereliev briefly outlined the format of the workplan and explained that the main part of the document was the table with the 8 topics and respective tasks.

154. After going through each task of the workplan, Mr Dereliev said that the Secretariat would further refine it with TC's chair. The revised document would be posted on the TC workspace before it was passed on to the StC.

Decision: The draft Work Plan for the AEWA Technical Committee 2022-2024 as presented in document AEWA/TC16.43 will be further refined and posted on the TC workspace before submission to StC16.

Agenda item 29. Date and Venue of the next Technical Committee Meeting

155. Mr Dereliev said that the Secretariat would try to convene the next TC as early as possible after MOP8, which would be in February or March 2022, which would give the Secretariat sufficient time to prepare for the meeting. Mr Dereliev further hoped that the next meeting would take place physically, possibly in the Czech Republic. If the Czech Republic or any other country could not host the meeting, it would take place at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany where the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat is based. Should the current situation caused by COVID-19 remain, the meeting would again be held in a virtual format.

Agenda item 30. Any Other Business

156. Ms Cromie noted that there was now a total of four items under any other business. Two of these items had been added during the course of the meeting.

157. Before handing over to Mr Dereliev, who would be giving an overview on the TC nomination procedure, Ms Cromie thanked the outgoing TC members for all their contributions. These were Mr Cherkaoui, Ms Roxburgh, Mr Defos du Rau, Mr Karpe and Ms Petrovych.

158. Mr Dereliev added that Ms Cromie was also one of the outgoing TC members. He thanked her on behalf of the Secretariat, the TC members and observers for all her efforts as a member of the Committee as well as for being the TC's Chair for the last three years. He also thanked the other outgoing members and said that the Secretariat was looking forward to working with them in future in their other individual capacities.

159. Mr Dereliev pointed out that there would not only be vacancies for the outgoing six TC members' positions, but that the Committee currently had two other vacancies for the positions of the regional representatives for Eastern Europe and Central Africa. Therefore, there was a total of eight vacancies. Of these, seven were electable for which the procedure was stipulated in the Modus Operandi.

160. Mr Dereliev told all those present that the Secretariat would issue a call for nominations on the TC workspace and urged the outgoing members to nominate candidates for their successors within their networks. Furthermore, an invitation to the Contracting Parties would be circulated to consider nominations with a deadline of 8 April 2021. He explained that a letter nominating the person should be submitted together with a justification, a CV and a declaration.

161. Mr Dereliev emphasised that the TC played an important role in the workflow of the treaty and fed into the processes of the Agreement. He was hoping to receive as many nominations as possible to establish a good pool of candidates. The non-electable position of a CEPA expert was at the discretion of the Chair based on proposals received.

162. Moving on to the next point under this agenda item, Mr Trouvilliez gave a brief update on the preparations for MOP8. He informed everyone that the MOP was planned to take place from 5-9 October 2021 in Budapest, Hungary and that the Host Country Agreement was currently being finalised. A decision on whether the meeting would take place physically or virtually would be taken at the end of July.

163. Mr Trouvilliez said that the Secretariat would like to organise an event on the sustainable use of wildlife on the Monday prior to the MOP to highlight the progress made through the EGMP and to present the results of the RESSOURCE project. The World Migratory Bird Day should also be celebrated in connection with this event.

164. The Secretariat would have an exhibition stand during the MOP to emphasise the importance of promoting adaptive harvest management, Mr Trouvilliez added.

165. The third point under this agenda item was about what process the documents would follow after this meeting. Mr Dereliev explained that each document would have its own path and would require different levels of engagement and contribution. The Secretariat would have to outline all of it and post

it on the TC workspace. This would give a clear picture of what lies ahead. Since sign-offs would be done in writing through the workspace, Mr Dereliev urged the TC members to pay attention to the postings in the near future.

166. Mr Dereliev further explained that ad-hoc working groups would need to be convened for some of the tasks, which would be indicated in an overview.

167. For the final point under any other business Mr Olivier Biber, Chair of the CMS African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group, gave an informative presentation on White Storks and plastics in Switzerland including some very expressive pictures. The presentation showed that plastic waste was a general problem for the storks: on the one hand they used it as nesting material and on the other hand it could be swallowed and was unconsciously fed to nestlings, which could lead to their death.

168. Mr Biber said there would be further photographic documentation as well as stomach content analyses of dead White Storks in Switzerland and analyses of swallowed plastic waste.

Agenda item 31. Closure

169. Ms Cromie thought that the meeting had covered a lot of ground and had signed off on a high number of documents, but also reminded everyone that there was still a lot of work ahead. She appreciated that there was a feeling of being committed together, although the meeting had not taken place in person. Ms Cromie went on to thank all TC members and observers for their contributions and the important work done during the week. She furthermore commended the AEWA Secretariat staff for their understanding of the content and process as well as for the well-organised meeting. Finally, she hoped to see everyone face to face at the next meeting.

170. Mr Trouvilliez thanked all participants for attending and thought that the discussions showed a lot of dedication, expertise and patience. He was especially appreciative of Mr Dereliev's team that had spent a lot of time on the preparation of the meeting and noted that considerable effort was always put into the production of the documents. Mr Trouvilliez hoped to meet everyone at the MOP in Budapest, Hungary, which he thought would be a good opportunity to show the links between wildlife, human health and global environment.

171. With that the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Appendix I – Regional Reports³

Region of Central Europe

1. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region

There are no specific National Action Plans but some actions have been implemented for the following species:

1. Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius a. arquata*, *N.a. orientalis* and *N. a. suschkini*)
2. Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa l. limosa* and *L. l. islandica*)
3. Lesser white-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)
4. Euroasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)
5. Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*)
6. Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)
7. White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)
8. Corncrake (*Crex crex*)
9. Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*)
10. Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

Monitoring of the species is undertaken in all the parties and range stated. Some conservation measures were implemented in Romania, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece.

2. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

No major emergency situations have been registered since April 2019 apart from:

- Heat wave in several countries Central Europe in summer 2019
- Heavy snowstorms in Italy and Austria in December 2020

Recommended measures given by AEWA and followed by parties during extreme snow storms are:

- Monitoring of the situation
- Temporary hunting ban
- Reduction of disturbance

³ The regional reports are presented as submitted by the regional representatives with no additional editing or formatting by the AEWA Secretariat.

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

No actions reported.

4. Activities on eradication and other type of action regarding alien species

Italy: Control or eradication of Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). Control or eradication of African Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)

Slovenia: A National Action Plan for Invasive Species is developed.

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats

Albania: Identification of sites of international and national importance for waterbirds. Habitat inventory for the potential Natura 2000 sites. Conservation measures are undertaken for creating artificial breeding habitats for Dalmatian Pelicans, Common Terns and Little Terns.

Bulgaria: An EU Life supported project is being implemented in Pomorie lake coastal lagoon.

Croatia: Conservation measures are undertaken for Common Terns.

Hungary: Thirty-two large-scale wetland restoration projects are to be carried out with EU funding by 2020.

Montenegro: Habitat inventory for Natura 2000 sites. Ulcinj Salina designated as Protected Area. Conservation measures are undertaken for creating artificial breeding habitats for Dalmatian Pelicans, an Common Terns.

Slovenia: Conservation measures are undertaken for Common Terns.

6. Phasing out the use of lead shot hunting in wetlands and progress in the region

Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Northern Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia: Fully phased out

Albania, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia: No progress since the last TC meeting.

7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats

Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia:

- Partial coverage of breeding and wintering waterbirds

- Wintering waterbirds better covered as part of the IWC carried out in all the countries part of AEWA

8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement

Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia:

- Several events for the World Migratory Bird Day
- Substantial education and information activities in Hungary.

9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

Albania: Almost all the coastal wetlands are threatened by urbanization, massive tourism, transport infrastructure, renewable energies and intensive agriculture. Problematic cases have been reported recently for Vjose-Narta (an international airport inside the wetland complex) and Divjaka-Karavasta (urbanization and intensive agriculture).

In other countries: Problematic cases exist but not reported!!!

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties

There is a partial use of AEWA guidelines or similar ones developed by other international institutions/organizations.

Region of North and South-Western Europe

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede the Agreement.

There are 16 Contracting Parties plus the EU, and 4 non-party Range States in the North and South-Western European region.

2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report.

Eight Parties (50%) provided feedback for the report.

3. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA ISSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached Annex 2)

Belgium:

In Flanders (northern Belgium) a species protection plan for wet grassland breeding birds, with focus on black-tailed godwit and curlew, has been approved by the minister. This species protection plan will run for 5 years, from 2021 to 2025.

Denmark:

Denmark is supporting and implementing several AEWA Action Plans under the European Goose Management Platform (EGMP), and supporting current seaduck work (relevant to management of Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*, Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* and Eider *Somateria mollissima*, in the Baltic region).

France:

- Regular contributions to the EGMP Data Centre and participation to the Greylag Goose Task Force. Major changes in minds at the national scale since the publication of the collective paper on Greylag goose management units (<https://bioone.org/journals/wildlife-biology/volume-2019/issue-1/wlb.00533/Spatiotemporal-distribution-of-greylag-goose-Anser-anser-resightings-on-the/10.2981/wlb.00533.full>).
- Member of the international working group for the International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Eurasian Curlew (lead by Daniel Brown – see reports online). Meeting organized in France (Paris) in September 2018. Adaptive Management Platform created in France (called CEGA). Decisions for Black-tailed Godwits and Eurasian curlew lead to no hunting i.e. a quota of 0. National management plans were ended in 2020 for these two species (<http://www.plan-bqn.fr> & <https://www.png-courliscendre.fr/>)
- In Mayotte, six Madagascar Pond Heron were fitted with a GPS tag, a world first for this species and 15 more are planned to be equipped in 2021 in the framework of the National Action Plan (https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/pna_crabier_blanc_ardeola_idae_2019_2023.pdf), cf: <https://www.lpo.fr/actualites/a-mayotte-six-crabiers-blancs-ont-ete-equipes-d-une-balise-une-premiere-au-niveau-mondial-dp1>

- Tour du Valat supported [the Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert group to organise their IXth workshop in Djerba, Tunisia from 14 to 18 November 2018](https://storkibisspoonbill.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Special_Publication_2_PROCEEDINGS_BOOK_IX_Workshop_Eurasian_Spoonbill_AEWA-International_Expert_Group.pdf). The proceedings and conclusions were published as special publication of the Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Conservation journal: https://storkibisspoonbill.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Special_Publication_2_PROCEEDINGS_BOOK_IX_Workshop_Eurasian_Spoonbill_AEWA-International_Expert_Group.pdf. New estimates and trends of the population were made available for each flyway as well as the progresses of the international action plan
- Tour du Valat contributed to the International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

Iceland:

- Out of 31 ISSAP seven are species native to Iceland or regular migrants. Out of eight seabird species proposed by TC in Bonn 2019 seven are native to Iceland. They are all monitored annually. Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* meeting was held in Iceland in 2019.

Netherlands:

Bewick's Swan

In September 2020, Rascha Nuijten successfully defended her PhD thesis entitled “Bewick’s swans in a changing world”. Her study is an important contribution to our understanding of abundance and distribution of Bewick’s Swans *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* in northern Europe and the mechanisms behind the observed changes therein. Five chapters of her thesis have now been published, and these are all open access, and can be reached through the links below.

- *Summary: In short, we used GPS tags with built-in accelerometers and water sensors, and a clever on-board processing of these data, to describe in detail the whereabouts and behaviour of the swans on spring migration. In this way, areas where aquatic foraging is taking place are delineated, revealing which of those are not protected. Based on ring re-sightings, we showed that the wintering distribution and migratory phenology have both changed, with swans wintering further east, and staying shorter in the wintering area. We could also show that individuals are consistent in their migratory timing, indicating that the frequency of individuals with different migratory schedules has changed over time (a generational shift). In contrast, for short-stopping we found evidence for both individual plasticity (individuals decrease their migration distances over their lifetime) and a generational shift. Finally, by using a population model that integrates census counts, estimates of juvenile proportions, and ring re-sightings, we were able to show that the population decrease since the mid-90s is primarily driven by a reduction in breeding success.*

This study will be of considerable value when reviewing the ISSAP Bewick’s Swan.

Calibrating tri-axial accelerometers for remote behavioural observations in Bewick’s swans <https://doi.org/10.19227/jzar.v8i4.522>

Less is more: On-board lossy compression of accelerometer data increases biologging capacity <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1365-2656.13164>

Chains as strong as the weakest link: remote assessment of aquatic resource use on spring migration by Bewick’s Swans <https://doi.org/10.5751/ACE-01682-150214>

Concurrent shifts in wintering distribution and phenology in migratory swans: Individual and generational effects <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/gcb.15151>
Apparent breeding success drives long-term population dynamics of a migratory swan <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jav.02574>

Black-tailed Godwit:

Overviews of numerous studies and activities on Black-tailed Godwit in two AEWA Black-tailed Godwit newsletters (spring and autumn 2020).

Organisation of the online Regional Meeting of Eastern European Range States.

Norway:

Norway is an active participant in the EGMP meetings, including TC's for specific species and the topical WG on agriculture and geese. Also, a regularly contributor with significant voluntary contributions to both the Data Centre and the AEWA administration in relation to the EGMP. There are contracts with the Norwegian Nature Research Institute (NINA) on related geese research issues, and a funded full-time officer for regional goose management plans with the national farmers union.

Related to the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) *Anser erythropus*, Norway has for decades been funding a national action programme, including surveys and research (e.g. satellite tagging). There has also been funding of AEWA activities along the migratory route, e.g. in Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and other countries. Norway has contributed to all EU life programmes, and in autumn of 2020 entered into a new Life+ program to conserve LWfG in Greece, Hungary and i.a. Lithuania. A significant new initiative of the new Life program is to acquire land in Greece (Evros delta) to be converted to a non-hunting and bird friendly area for both LWfG and other wetland species.

Norway is active in the Action Plan's Working Group for Long-tailed Duck, Velvet Scoter and Eider, and funds scientific contributions from NINA.

NEA has drafted a new national seabird action plan, which is now circulating among the relevant ministries. The Action Plan has a focus on concrete activities, of which many are relevant for AEWA ISSAPs as well as follow up of AEWA guidelines issued by AEWA MoP (e.g. marine litter). The AP also supports continued focus on research and development of innovative techniques for research (cf the seabird monitoring programme: <http://www.seapop.no/no/> with reports and recent research papers).

Sweden:

- The national plan for Lesser White-fronted Goose is currently being reviewed.
- There is an on-going work with the development of a national management plan for big birds (geese, swans and cranes).
- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has initiated a national project to improve Sweden's implementation of AEWA ISSAP's.

UK:

Curlew:

English Curlew partnership: UK has in recent years seen significant population declines as a consequence of habitat loss, predation pressure and unsustainable hunting along their migratory pathways. Therefore, Defra has agreed to provide the seed funding to establish the National Recovery Partnership for Curlew in England, which aims to bring together a range of organisations with a desire to protect and conserve this species.

The UK Government will continue to play our role in helping to address the threats to Curlew *Numenius arquata* conservation, through for example funding provided by agri-environments schemes or direct engagement in specific activities such as Natural England's project to recover the species in the East of England.

EGMP:

The UK remains committed to supporting and implementing the EGMP. In 2020 the UK funded the creation of a population model for the East Greenland Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* population. This model will inform the implementation of the Barnacle Goose International Single Species Management Plan (ISSMP) across the East Greenland population's flyway. It will hopefully also inform the implementation of the plan for the Svalbard population as well. The UK has also supported the initial development of an impact model to inform the implementation of the Barnacle Goose ISSMP in both the East Greenland and Svalbard populations, it is hoped the impact model will be completed in 2021.

4. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

France:

Unusual mortality of shearwaters in:

- Tunisia (<https://lapresse.tn/59355/mortalite-inhabituelle-des-oiseaux-en-tunisie-lassociation-des-amis-des-oiseaux-explique/>, <http://www.stop-braconnage.com/blog/details/quand-les-oiseaux-tombent-du-ciel>)
- Algeria (https://m.facebook.com/103902681181215/videos/829850300759351/?refsrc=https%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com%2Fstory.php&_rdr)
- Italy (probably the toxic diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia* for the first three cases)
- French coast (Incidental catch for this last case) in April-May 2019.

Iceland:

Little availability of sandeel to breeding seabirds in South and West Iceland has been ongoing since 2005 affecting breeding success of many seabird species in the region, especially Atlantic Puffin and Arctic Tern. Improved breeding success the last couple of years indicates that the situation is improving.

Netherlands:

- New avian influenza outbreak in The Netherlands in autumn 2020, with many casualties amongst Barnacle Geese and other waterfowl. The spread and intensity of the outbreak was monitored by Dutch Centre for Avian Migration & Demography, Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology, Dutch Wildlife Health Centre and Erasmus University.
- In January 2019 the shipping container MSC Zoe lost 386 containers during extremely bad weather conditions in the North Sea just north of the Dutch Wadden islands. Because of this incident numerous tiny plastic particles were stranded on beaches, mud flats and salt marshes. Together with the Wadden Academy the Dutch Rijkswaterstaat has started a research project focusing on the mid-term effects of the plastic contamination, amongst others on (avi)fauna.

- Severe draughts in 2019 and 2020 affecting the breeding success of inland breeding waders in wet grasslands and agricultural grassland as well as of coastal breeding waterfowl and waders. Furthermore 2019 turned out to be an extremely good year for field voles, thus influencing the population sizes of mammalian predators that turned to inland breeding waders in 2020 when voles were far less numerous.

Norway:

In spring and summer of 2020 mass mortality occurred among Eiders in the southern part of Norway. Ca 1000 specimens were collected and analyzed. Birds were lighter than normal and the cause of death by starvation is believed to be lack of available prey. The causes behind this are still debated. If lack of prey is the cause, then it is quite possible that overfishing in the North Sea coupled with changes in top-predator systems and disruption of the ecosystem web, and algae bloom as aggravated by climate change with rise in sea water temperatures, could be important drivers.

Sweden:

No emergency situations have occurred.

5. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives.

Iceland:

Natural colonization: E-Greenland population of Barnacle Geese has been a stop-over visitor in Iceland both on spring and autumn migration has recently been established as a new breeding species in Iceland. New monitoring scheme estimating the breeding population and associated non-breeders was established in 2019 and repeated in 2020 to be in synchrony with the winter count in Scotland and Ireland every third year.

Sweden:

No new activities but two ongoing initiatives – the Lesser White-fronted Goose reinforcement program (see Section 9 below for information on recently published genetics research) and the White Stork re-establishment project.

6. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

France:

- Implementation of the revised Action Plan 2016-2020 for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* in the Western Palearctic: LIFE 17NAT-FR-00542 “Oxyura against Oxyura” project 2018-2023. See results (in French): <https://ofb.gouv.fr/life-oxyura>
- Drafting of a management plan for the Egyptian goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* within the framework of the EU invasive species regulation (n°1143/2014)

Netherlands:

- Unsuccessful activity on the eradication of the small and non-expanding breeding population of Ruddy Duck
- Close monitoring on the breeding of African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (only occasionally breeding in The Netherlands)
- No hunting ban on Greater Canadian Goose *Branta canadensis* and Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*.

Norway:

Norway has a long standing AP on eradication of mink on islands/islets with breeding seabird colonies (e.g. terns, gulls, eider). The activity is mainly total eradication of mink during winter and spring, with the use of traps and mink-dogs. Seabirds respond well to this and there has been a marked improvement in successful reproduction where mink have been successfully eradicated. However, these island/islets need to be revisited and mink eradicated annually.

Sweden:

- In 2019 sightings of Egyptian goose were reported from nine sites, seven of these were confirmed to be Egyptian goose. Six of the seven confirmed individuals were eradicated, four of them in SW Sweden, one in the Örebro region and one in the Stockholm region. (The last one disappeared by itself). In 2020, two out of three confirmed sightings were eradicated, both in the southernmost regions of Sweden.
- Since the last report there has been increased measures against invasive alien species. For example, there have been projects on limitation of populations of raccoon dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, yellow skunk cabbage *Lysichiton americanus* and muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*. These species have been successfully eradicated from at least some of the sites where they did occur earlier or at least haven't been able to spread further. Species that have been difficult to eradicate are for example yellow floating-heart *Nymphoides peltate*, Nuttall's waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* and different species of water turtles *Trachemys sp.*

UK:

Ruddy Duck

The UK Ruddy Duck population is now thought to number approximately 12 birds which are found spread across seven regions. Many of these are single birds and although some movement between regions does occur this is unusual and so the species is probably functionally extinct in most regions of the UK. Breeding is becoming increasingly rare and the available evidence suggests that only one breeding event occurred in 2018 (the birds being culled in December of that year) and there is no evidence to date of breeding in 2019 or 2020. It is however possible that a very small number of birds capable of breeding (2-3 pairs in total) might still exist in the West Midlands and North-West of England. Monitoring of the population via internet reports, communication from site managers, and site visits continues as does culling of birds wherever there is considered to be a risk of breeding in the future.

Egyptian Goose

The UK Egyptian Goose population is almost exclusively confined to England, with expanding core areas in East Anglia (mainly Norfolk) and the Thames basin, and some colonisation of the East Midlands; away from these core areas it currently remains a localised species. In 2018, we estimated

a GB population of 6,095 for 2011-12 and projected estimates of 8,361 for 2017-18 and 9,661 at the end of December 2018. Since December 2019, Egyptian Geese have been subject a series of restrictions and prohibitions under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 and in England, from 1st January 2021, the species has been included on two new general licences that permit users to kill or take certain species of wild birds for defined purposes. Ongoing evaluations of options for larger-scale management of the species have been hampered by Covid 19 restrictions.

7. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

Denmark:

In Denmark implementation of AEWA waterbird conservation measures are mainly carried out under the EU Natura 2000 planning process, which runs in a 6-year cycle, involving three *stages*:

- a) review of conservation status for each Natura 2000 site (“baseline reports”, published by the Ministry of Environment), followed by
- b) conservation measure priorities planned for the next 6-year for each Natura 2000 site (“Natura 2000 plans”, published by the Ministry of Environment), and followed by
- c) local action measure planning (“Natura 2000 action plans”, published by individual Municipalities, responsible for these actions),

Denmark is currently in the third 6-year cycle, having published *stage a* (baseline reports for 2022-2027) in 2020, and now in the process of preparing *stage b* (Natura 2000 plans for 2022-2027). Many of these involve restoration of wetlands throughout the country.

France:

- French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), together with LPO and Environment Ministry, reviewed IWC information, as well as national and local surveys of breeding populations, for each significant wetland and each waterbird species in French territories within the African-Eurasian migratory Waterbird Agreement to update the French network of critical sites. They updated the French list of critical sites from the outdated or sometimes erroneous 129 sites listed by the CSN to only 97, including 32 sites not previously detected by the CSN. They also showed that only one French critical site out of five benefits from the strongest category of protection over more than three quarters of its area. Furthermore, almost one critical site out of five has no protection at all over more than half of its area.
- France has designated Etang de Saint-Paul as its 49th Wetland of International Importance (Site no. 2398). It is the first Ramsar Site in the French overseas region of Réunion Island (situated within AEWA range). <https://www.ramsar.org/news/etang-de-saint-paul-in-reunion-named-as-a-ramsar-site>
- 5-years Life+ Envoll programme ended in December 2018 with the restoration or creation of more than 30 artificial islands for breeding gulls and terns on the French Mediterranean coast (<http://life-envoll.eu/?lang=en>)
- LPO (BirdLife France) and other NGOs obtain obtained the cancellation of the authorization to draw water for irrigation in the Charente basin, as vast mosaic of wet meadows and pastures. <https://www.lpo.fr/actualites/la-justice-annule-l-autorisation-de-prelevement-d-eau-pour-l-irrigation-sur-le-bassin-de-la-charente>
- The Mediterranean Alliance for wetlands (facilitated by Tour du Valat) coordinates the intervention of civil society to lobby for wetlands protection under immediate serious threats (<https://tourduvalat.org/en/mediterranean-wetlands/the-mediterranean-alliance-for-wetlands/>). The Mediterranean Alliance actively lobbied for the protection of several threatened sites around

the Mediterranean: see also <https://www.facebook.com/Mediterranean-Alliance-for-Wetlands-2769895103052941/>

- In the last two years, France created several nature reserves including one locally important aythya duck wintering marsh of 315ha near Marseille: <http://www.reserves-naturelles.org/pourra-domaine-du-ranquet>

Iceland:

Restoration of drained wetlands is increasing and important for waterbirds, in addition to mitigating emission of methane from peat soils.

Netherlands:

- Actual information on important bird sites on <https://www.sovon.nl/nl/gebieden> (both N2000 and additional sites)
- Completion of the new IBA inventory (BirdLife The Netherlands & Sovon)
- Start of the review of the SPA network en SPA species
- Start of several BirdLife The Netherlands research projects on waterfowl and waders in the Dutch Waddensea, the Markerwadden area and the southwestern Delta.

Sweden:

- Starting in 2018, the government has invested funds for the restoration and construction of wetlands in order to strengthen the landscape's own ability to maintain and balance water flows. The restorations that have been carried out have also had an impact on waterbirds. With government funding, approximately 760 hectares of wetlands were restored in 2019. (Pending data from 2020.) From 2021, more funds will be invested in wetland restoration, knowledge and data, which will, among other things, strengthen waterbird habitats.
- For the two years 2019 and 2020, work with restoration of wetlands in protected areas concerned around 10,000 hectares in total. Most of the restoration was blocking/filling of ditches in forest and mires. A minor part was explicitly directed to improvements of waterbird habitats.
- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is funding several research projects on wetlands that are ongoing during 2019-2022. A report on the impact of restorations on the bird fauna has been published (in Swedish <http://www.naturvardsverket.se/Om-Naturvardsverket/Publikationer/ISBN/6900/978-91-620-6933-9/>).
- There is an on-going progress on making old wetland data available digitally and development on refined methods for new inventory data from satellite.
- During 2019 about 8,500 hectares of peatland sites were protected as nature reserves. (Pending data from 2020.)
- During 2019 and 2020 wetlands have been classified into mire types through satellite images. The results will be used in second rotation of the inventory of vegetation change in open mires using satellite images.

8. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

Denmark:

Hunting is regulated under the 'Act on Hunting and Game Management'. Quarry hunting bags are reported annually by >95% of hunters, and hunting regulations are reviewed every 4 years, a process initiated in late 2020 prior to a planned revision of shooting regulations planned for 2022. Shooting with lead-shot anywhere has been banned since 1996. Last year agreement was made to even phase out use of lead rifle bullets by 2023 (these are not used for waterbird hunting, but nevertheless pollute the environment).

Iceland:

No action taken but the issue has been discussed among NGOs both in field of conservation and hunting community.

Netherlands:

Non-issue in The Netherlands as lead is completely banned in The Netherlands.

Norway:

Norway has in place a ban on lead shot in wetlands.

Sweden:

- For several years, ammunition in the form of lead shot may not be used in Sweden for hunting in wetlands.
- On 25th November 2020 the European Parliament voted to ban the use of lead ammunition in wetlands across the EU. This will be regulated in the EU's framework regulation for chemicals (REACH). There is a transition period of 24 months.

UK:

In November 2020, the European Parliament voted to introduce a restriction on lead shot in and around wetlands which goes further than domestic lead shot regulations in England. However, this restriction did not come into force before the end of the Transition Period and therefore will not be part of the retained law that the UK will carry forward from 1 January 2021. The UK government is therefore in the process of seriously exploring the most effective ways forward in terms of domestic policy. Any future decisions relating to the Regulation for Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) restrictions in the UK will be taken under independent domestic chemicals policy.

The UK Wildlife Crime Police Chief's Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) has recently set up a working group to consider the issues around improving enforcement of the restrictions on the use of lead shot which is having a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of waterbirds across the UK.

9. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

Denmark:

Monitoring is likewise undertaken annually to support this process for each EU Special Protection Area for Birds, where Denmark currently have 124 sites, the majority of which are designated for waterbirds. Monitoring also support the Danish EU Article 12 reporting duties under the Birds Directive, most recently submitted in 2019.

France:

- Benjamin Folliot's PhD thesis on Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* trends in numbers and demographic parameters, including delineation of flyway limits (<http://www.theses.fr/2018MONTG043>).
- Recent paper questioning the delimitation of Greylag Goose flyway limits, and in particular the link between Camargue wintering sites and Central European breeding grounds (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10344-019-1304-4>).
- Decline of Gannet *Morus bassanus* as indicator of marine ecosystem collapse: Grémillet, D., Péron, C., Lescroël, A., Fort, J., Patrick, S. C., Besnard, A., & Provost, P. (2020). [No way home: collapse in northern gannet survival rates point to critical marine ecosystem perturbation](#). *Marine Biology*, 167(12), 1-10.
- Recent paper on difficulties in interpreting waterbird trends: Vallecillo, D., Gauthier-Clerc, M., Guillemain, M., Vittecoq, M., Vandewalle, P., Roche, B. & Champagnon, J. Reliability of animal counts and implications for the interpretation of trends. *Ecology and Evolution* (in press)
- Recommendation on the use of remote sensing to potentially improve IWC in Sahel : <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ibi.12911>
- In the framework of the RESSOURCE program, France (including OFB & Tour du Valat) supported waterbird surveys in 1 Ramsar site in Mali, 4 Ramsar sites in Chad as well as in several seldom surveyed sites in Sudan. <https://www.swm-programme.info/ressource-project>
- The MedWaterbird network (<https://www.medwaterbirds.net/page.php?id=35>) provided support for IWC Total Counts to North African countries for field operation, coordination and analyses of North African databases.

Iceland:

A report published in 2017 on IBAs is a major milestone in describing the situation (Skarphedinnsson et al. 2017 (https://utgafa.ni.is/fjolrit/Fjolrit_55.pdf)).

Netherlands:

- Latest report on national trends in Dutch waterbirds 2017/2018 (Watervogels in Nederland in 2017/2018): <https://www.sovon.nl/nl/publicaties/watervogels-nederland-20172018-0>
- Start of population studies on Avocet, Common Tern, Common Ringed Plover and Kentish Plover under the Wij&Wadvogels programme funded by the Waddenfund
- Ongoing research in the CHIRP (Cumulative Human Impact on biRd Populations), with focus on the Oystercatcher (<https://www.chirpscholekster.nl/>)
- Conservation Ecology Group, Groningen (<https://www.rug.nl/research/gelifes/ceg/publications>)

- Meadowbird research, Groningen (<https://www.rug.nl/research/gelifes/ceg/piersma/meadow-birds>)
- Shorebird research, Groningen (<https://www.rug.nl/research/gelifes/ceg/piersma/intertidal-foodwebs>)
- Active participation in the modelling consortium of AEWA-EGMP
- Coordination of international goose monitoring for adaptive management of geese populations of AEWA-EGMP (focus on Barnacle Goose)
- Demographic studies on Lesser White-fronted Goose commissioned by the Swedish Lesser White-fronted Goose Project (<https://www.sovon.nl/nl/publicaties/annual-survival-swedish-lesser-white-fronted-geese>)
- GooseScare research programme at the Netherlands Institute for Ecology: Indirect effects of goose disturbance
- ArcticPinkfeet research programme at the Netherlands Institute for Ecology: Response of geese to climate warming in the Arctic
- GooseHeart research programme at the Netherlands Institute for Ecology: A new style of life in a traditionally Arctic migratory bird
- Ongoing research on and taking conservation measures to secure breeding success in the Spoonbill by the Dutch Working Group Spoonbill (Werkgroep Lepelaar) (Oudman T., de Goeij P., Piersma T. & Lok T. 2017. *Colony-breeding Eurasian Spoonbills in The Netherlands: local limits to population growth with expansion into new areas*. *Ardea*: 105(2): 113-124)
- Assessment of the value of the Rhine valley for waterbirds (van Roomen, M., Hustings, F., van Winden, E., Dronneau, C., Frauli, C., Strebel, N., Wahl, J., Koffijberg, K. & van Turnhout, C. 2020. *Waterbirds in the international Rhine Valley: numbers, distribution and trends*. ICPR rap nr. 277, Sovon rap nr. 2020/99. International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, Koblenz).

Norway:

See item 3 and new national seabird AP.

Sweden:

- Since 1967, seabirds have been inventoried yearly in January. This work is a part of the International Waterbird Census. Seabird counts are carried out from land and mainly by volunteers. Large parts of Sweden's southern coast are covered by this inventory, but also parts of the northern coast. More information (in Swedish): <https://www.fageltaxering.lu.se/inventera/metoder/sjofagel-host-och-vinter/metodik-sjofagel-host-och-vinter>.
- Since 2015, there has been a systematic monitoring of birds breeding along the coasts. A total of 200 squares of 2x2 km are inventoried with fixed positions. Each square is inventoried once a year. More information (in Swedish): <https://www.fageltaxering.lu.se/inventera/metoder/kustfagelrutorna/metodik-kustfagelrutor>.
- BirdLife Sweden and Lund University (Swedish Bird Monitoring Programme) are administrating surveys to monitor wetland birds within a specific monitoring programme ("Sjöfågelrytter"). More information (in Swedish): <http://www.fageltaxering.lu.se/>.
- There are several other programs where seabirds are being monitored. The most ambitious one is the fixed routes. More information (in Swedish): <https://www.fageltaxering.lu.se/inventera/metoder/standardrutter>.

- Since 2010, four County Administrative Boards along the northern coast run a joint subprogramme called the Coastal birds in the Gulf of Bothnia. The purpose is to register the presence and population sizes of breeding bird species characteristic of coastal and archipelagic areas in the Gulf of Bothnia, thus enabling changes of these to be monitored. A total of 100 squares of 2x2 km are surveyed on a 4-year rotation. More information: <https://www.gbif.org/dataset/252f45fe-dfb6-46d6-9457-59bb3947e517>.
- In a pilot project, which is a collaboration between Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Estonia, in 2021, light data loggers will be attached on breeding individuals of greater scaup, velvet scoter, long-tailed duck, common eider and red-breasted merganser to learn more about their migratory patterns. Swedish participants are the Swedish Hunters Association and Lund University. Field work in Sweden will take place on Hävringsö Island (in the Bay of Brå) and in Svaipa (in northern Sweden).
- In a coordinated inventory, in which several HELCOM countries participate, wintering seabirds in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea is being counted using airplanes. The aim is for these counts to be conducted approximately every six years to be able to follow changes in population development and distribution. The coordination is done within JWGBird (Joint OSPAR/HELCOM/ICES Working Group on Seabirds), who was responsible for planning and coordinating the inventory efforts as well as data management for the winter 2019/2020.
- BirdLife Sweden is running a project named "Threatened Coastal Birds". One of the main goals of the project is to map important areas for a number of coastal bird species. The target species are birds that breed in colonies and that are foraging in aquatic habitats far (at least 10 km) away from the colonies. So far, the project has focused on Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus fuscus*). For those two species, data have been collected from many of the most important colonies, especially in the Stockholm area and adjacent regions. Distribution and breeding success are monitored, but focus is also on finding the most important feeding areas. Another part of the project is monitoring Common Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) and Razorbill (*Alca torda*). The monitoring will result in sensitivity maps that BirdLife Sweden will create together with Lund University, and some have already been provided to authorities. The most important areas will qualify as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). BirdLife Sweden is now involved in the process of expanding the Swedish Natura 2000 system with some of these newly appointed areas.
- A project linked to the "Threatened Coastal Birds"-project is called "Africa back-and-forth", in which Caspian Terns and Lesser Black-backed Gulls are followed with GPS during the entire migration. Both species experience harsh and dangerous conditions along their respective migration routes, these studies will provide important knowledge for conservation. The project is also focusing on spreading the knowledge to the next generation of conservationists by reaching out to schools with adapted publications.
- BirdLife Sweden is performing a thorough update of their IBA system. An important part of the project is to collect population data, but also to adjust the GIS maps according to importance for the birds occurring within the IBAs. Several new IBAs have also been proposed, and more are to be expected. GPS data from the projects involving Caspian Tern, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Common Guillemot and Razorbill have been used to adapt IBAs according to the most important feeding areas for these and other species.
- Regular goose counts started in Sweden in 1977 as a part of the International Goose Counts organized by Wetlands International. All goose species are counted yearly and there is also an aim to cover all Greylag Geese sites and Bean Goose sites. More information (in Swedish): <http://www.zoo.ekol.lu.se/waterfowl/GooseInv/gcount2.htm>.

- There is an ongoing research project where the ecology and population structure of Bean Goose is being studied.
- In an on-going research project spring-staging swans, geese and cranes in coastal landscapes of northern Sweden are being monitored.
- By looking at which subspecies are shot during hunting there is an ongoing study to look at genetic structures in the bean goose population. By collecting heads, the main objective is to learn the proportion shot Taiga Bean Goose and Tundra Bean Geese.
- LWfG population genetics: To investigate whether the Swedish Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) population harbour a hybrid population carrying genes of Greater White-fronted Goose (GWfG) and Greylag Goose, a genetic study was conducted including samples from 21 LWfG representing the Swedish, Norwegian and the Russian populations. The results can be summarized as follows:
 1. There is no evidence of genetic introgression from GWfG or any other goose species into the Swedish LWfG population.
 2. The Swedish LWfG population is genetically distinct from the Norwegian and Russian populations.
 3. The Norwegian and Russian populations are genetically indistinguishable.
 4. There was a higher level of inbreeding level and lower genomic diversity in the Swedish population compared to the Norwegian and Russian populations.
 5. The genetic report can be downloaded here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-75315-y>.
- Hybrids between LWfG and Barnacle Goose: Following the use of Barnacle Goose as foster parents in a conservation program for Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) in Sweden 1981-1999, it was observed that mixed breeding pairs were established in the wild. This study indicate that establishment of mixed pairs related to shared moulting habits of the two species, in the Bothnian Bay during late 1990's. Starting in 2003, five mixed pairs produced at least 49 free-flying hybrid offspring until 2013, when last breeding pair expired. Numbers reported did not increase in parallel to production of young hybrids over time. After 2013 number of hybrids started to decrease in Sweden and the Netherlands. Lower numbers of hybrids than expected can partly be explained by management actions taken but may also be associated with low fitness due to genetic outbreeding. Mixed pairs and their offspring entirely adopted the migratory habits of Barnacle Geese with very little overlap with LWfG. The study could not present any evidence that the hybrids ever did pose a serious threat to LWfG breeding in Fennoscandia.
- LWfG survival analysis: A dataset of 663 individually marked Lesser White-fronted Geese (LWfG) and 8 000 resightings was used to analyse annual survival rates in the Swedish breeding population. One period covered 1984-1999, when juvenile LWfG were released with Barnacle Geese serving as foster parent; the second 2010-2017, when fledglings were released in flocks without parental care. In both periods, also 2nd year birds (yearlings) were released, either as independent flocks (period 1) or in flocks together with fledglings (period 2). Survival analyses were performed using the Cormack-Jolly-Seber (CJS) models in program MARK. A year was defined as the period from 1 May to 1 May to account for the distribution of resightings within the year. Calculations were done for 1984-2003 (period 1) and 2012-2017 (period 2). Resighting probability was high and increased during period 1 (up to 0.85-0.94 in 2003, highest in females) as well as in period 2 (0.95-0.99 in 2017, highest in 1st year birds, no sex difference). The top-ranking model for survival in period 1 showed a difference between sexes (small in most cases) and the 3 age classes (1st year, 2nd year, adult) and birds released as fledglings and yearlings. Moreover, there was a linear increase from 1984 to 2003 in all groups. In period 2, best models

expressed no trend in survival in the short period considered (5 years) but showed independent effects of age (2 or 3 classes) and age at release. In both project periods, survival was lowest in birds released as yearling (0.27-0.36). First-year survival of birds released as fledgling ranged from 0.62-0.72 in period 1 but was lower in project 1 (0.29). Adult survival varied between 0.71 and 0.82 in period 1 to 0.57 in period 2. The results are discussed with respect to release method and conditions in the breeding area. In an additional modelling approach in 2020/2021 survival estimates for the 'new' period after 2010 are updated using an additional year of resighting data (2018-2019). In addition, these updated estimates are combined in a population model with data on the reproduction of free-living LWfG of this population and on the numbers of young birds released in the breeding area, to explore what population development can be expected given the current demographics, and how important the reinforcement with captive-bred young is to the population.

- LWfG mapping migration and site use by tracking: Starting in 2014 five different wild adults and 14 released Lesser White-fronted Geese (LWfG) have carried satellite transmitters to track migration and site use. Due to high initial mortality of the released birds to little data is available for analysis. But on the other hand, the data retrieved from the wild birds is now part of a study that will be published soon. Detailed information given by individual tracked LWfG breeding in Sweden is the last piece of a puzzle in mapping the species flyways within Europe. The study focuses to answer two aspects: 1) Do the Swedish population show completely different flyway compared to Russian and Norwegian birds or do they overlap? 2) For conservation work for the Swedish birds mapping sites and spotlight for gaps in appropriate site protection is of crucial value.
- Harvest data: Collecting of Swedish harvest data has been done since 1939. During the last two years several improvements and development projects have been initiated. After launching a web-based tool for reporting harvest a decade ago the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife management now implement a reporting application for mobile phones. Also, several changes are in pipeline to adjust today's system with the requirements given by different processes within AEWA.

In Sweden harvest data is collected from voluntary reporting hunting teams. There are different methods on how to extrapolate such data to national level. One specific approach has been explored in depth.

- Quantifying harvest data from partial reporting: Using a hierarchical Bayesian framework, models for hunting reports is introduced that accounts for different structures of the data. Focusing on Swedish harvest reports of red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), European pine marten (*Martes martes*), and Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*), predictive performance has been evaluated through training and validation sets as well as Leave One Out Cross Validation. The analyses revealed that to provide reliable harvest estimates, analyses must account for both random variability among hunting teams and the effect of hunting area per team on the harvest rate. Disregarding the former underestimated the uncertainty, especially at finer spatial resolutions (county and hunting management precincts). Disregarding the latter imposed a bias that overestimated total harvest. Support was also found for association between average harvest rate and variability, yet the direction of the association varied among species. However, this feature proved less important for predictive purposes. Importantly, the hierarchical Bayesian framework improved previously used point estimates by reducing sensitivity to low reporting and presenting inherent uncertainties.
- Swedish data on goose hunting and implications for management: National data (indices) were used for Greylag goose, Bean goose, and Canada goose to study shifts in temporal trends and correlative patterns, and to infer possible causal links between harvest and population trends. The

study provides an opportunity to guide management given the data collected within the present monitoring, as well as to suggest improvements for future data collection. The populations of Greylag and Canada geese increased in Sweden 1979–2018, but this long-term trend included a recent decrease in the latter species. Bean goose breeding index decreased, whilst staging numbers and harvest varied with no clear long-term trend. For Canada goose, the analysis suggests that harvest may affect population growth negatively. For Bean goose the corresponding relationship was negative as well, but not statistically significant. For Greylag goose any effect of harvest on autumn counts the following year couldn't be detected. It was found that the present data and analysis of coherence may suffice as basis for decisions for the current management situation in Sweden for Greylag and Canada goose populations. However, for management of Bean geese data lack crucial information. For all goose species the study advocate information that is more precise. Data such as hunting effort, age-structure of goose populations, and mark-recapture data to estimate survival and population size, is needed to feed predictive population models guidance of future Swedish and European goose management.

- The Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences and Kristianstad University runs a project regarding geese management in the new agricultural landscape, from the field to the flyway. Four integrated sub-projects aim to: 1) increase understanding of movements and habitat utilization by geese in the new agricultural landscapes, 2) evaluate and develop tools to alleviate crop damage, 3) increase understanding of patterns and processes in the socio-ecological goose management system, and 4) study challenges of national and flyway-level management and how to overcome these challenges (e.g. lack of appropriate monitoring, effort needed to regulate population size). The project has an explicit multi-species multi-actor trans-disciplinary approach spanning spatial scales from field and farm to flyway. It will provide missing knowledge and tools facilitating proactive future management of geese.
- The Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences conducts a study on the connection between damages and number and distribution of birds. The goal is to:
 1. identify and quantify landscape factors causing certain wetlands to be national hotspots for geese, cranes and swans (Large Grazing Birds, LGB) and to study whether these bird hotspots co-vary with distribution of crop damage
 2. identify and quantify local factors affecting the risk and degree of damage on agricultural fields given the wetland is a hotspot for LGB
 3. develop a standardised method for predicting crop damage to improve the cost-effectiveness of proactive tools for preventing damage
 4. adaptively improve proactive tools and create a dynamic compensatory payment system to support farmers in the neighbouring landscape of wetlands
 5. suggest how to include crop damage predictions when planning wetland restorations to improve future management actions and crop protection.
- The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences is running a project in collaboration, regarding crane management – how we can combine a sustainable agriculture with wetland biodiversity. The main objective is to improve the knowledge of the interactions between cranes, agricultural production and wetland bird diversity and the consequences it may have for stakeholder conflicts and successful management strategies. The more specific goals are to:
 1. understand whether the increasing crane population affect wetland bird diversity,
 2. study the effectiveness of crop damage preventive measures,
 3. understand conditions for stakeholder engagement in mutually beneficial crane, farming and wetland management,
 4. be able to make informed trade-offs between management objectives,

5. adapt crop damage prevention, farming and wetland restorations to reduce negative impact on agriculture and wetland bird diversity.

10. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.

France:

- In the framework of the RESSOURCE program, France (including OFB & Tour du Valat) provided training on waterbirds identification and monitoring and on the Agreement to 8 Chadian wildlife staff and 30 Sudanese wildlife staff <https://www.swm-programme.info/ressource-project>
- In the framework of the MedWaterbird network (<https://www.medwaterbirds.net/page.php?id=35>), ongoing project to develop and implement a scholar module on waterbird censuses and wetland conservation in five Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Turkey) aimed at universities and high schools.

Sweden:

No activities since last report.

11. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

Iceland:

Wind energy development: A lot of pressure from the private sector. Important to map migratory routes of birds for planning purposes.

Sweden:

Several wind farms are planned on, or adjacent to, some offshore banks. Wind farms that are furthest along in the process and where it might be a potential threat are a few facilities in the Kattegat. However, permits for these wind power facilities are yet to be decided.

12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines as per Section 3 of Annex 2)

13. Any other information.

Iceland:

A new national legislation for the protection, conservation and hunting of wild birds and wild mammals has been circulated in the Parliament for consideration.

Region of Northern Africa

Republic of Algeria

Party Number: 94

Entry in force: December 2005

1. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans No
2. Emergency situations :
 - Mortality of several waterbirds species
 - Nearly 4% decrease in the number of migratory waterbirds according to the Forest department
3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives : No
4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species: No
5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats. No
6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. No
7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.
 - First study on waterbirds wintering at the southern Mekhada marsh (North-East Algerian RAMSAR SITE)
 - Biodiversity and phenological status of the waterbirds of the Lac des Oiseaux (Northeast of Algeria)
 - The breeding ecology of Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* at Lake Tonga, north-eastern Algeria
 - Check list of waterbirds at Wadi Djedi in Ziban Oasis-Algeria
 - First study on waterbirds wintering at the southern Mekhada marsh (North-East Algerian Ramsar site)
 - ECOLOGY OF AVIAN SETTLEMENTS IN LAKE TONGA (NORTHEAST ALGERIA)
 - Structure of waterbird assemblages in fragmented coastal wetlands of Northeastern Algeria
8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.
 - Celebration of World Migratory Bird Day in 2029 but not in 2020 due to Covid-19 sanitary restrictions. Also, trainings in field ornithology carried out by the the Forests conservation authorities (DGF) as part of the Human Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Program
9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural development, ..) No

10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (measures, changes in legislation, etc.). No

11. Any other information.

- Constantine: count of more than 3,300 nesting waterbirds in wetlands
- Algeria: more than 6,135 breeding waterbirds counted in May

Republic of Egypt

Party Number: 1

Entry in force: November 1983

1. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans No
2. Emergency situations

Several migratory bird species are illegally hunted, kept and openly sold across the country. The illegal trade of wild species is not banned in most of the animal markets of Cairo and other big cities. Moreover, the virtual trade of wild animals including migratory birds is common in the social media

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives NO
4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species:
 - A National Strategy and Action Plan for Invasive and Alien Species is being developed. The first draft was produced in 2017. It's expected to have it in place in 2019
 - The aquatic weeds and reeds.
 - As part of the National Program for Rehabilitation of the Northern Lakes. The program is currently being implemented in Burullus and Manzala Lakes and will extend to cover all the lakes.
5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.
6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. No
7. 7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.
 - Monitoring programs of waterbirds are mainly confined the wetlands located within protected areas like Ras Mohamed, Red Sea Islands, . Efforts are also done to do the monitoring in Lake Nasser although non protected but it's one of the important wetlands. A regular census program was established in 2010 for Lake Nasser with the support of The French National Office for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS).
 - Regional project is being implemented under the framework of the AEWA African Initiative, the RESSOURCE project. That project aims at strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment to achieve the integrated management of migratory water birds and wetland resources in Africa.

- Waterbird habitat requirements and responses to anthropogenic stressors along the Nile in Egypt
8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.
 - Awareness about AEWA constitute a component of the general biodiversity awareness programs.
 - many awareness events are carried out but not in the framework of specific program or strategy.
 - World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) celebrated in 2019 but not 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions
 9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural development, ..) No
 10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties pments, changes in legislation, etc.). No
 11. Any other information.

The important areas for waterbirds that are declared as protected areas are managed as part of the conservation programs of the protected areas, thus NCS is following a holistic approach in conserving the national ecosystems.

Reducing illegal bird killing along Egypt's Mediterranean coast.



Republic of Libya

Party Number:

Entry in force: June 2005

Despite the fragile political situation in Libya, ongoing monitoring of water birds carried out by Libyan society for birds, The monitoring has allowed covering most of the important wetlands the this huge but instable country

1. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans No

2. Emergency situations

- Some water and marine birds died along the Libyan coasts. No causes have been given



so far

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species. No

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

- waterbirds survey since 2005/2020 water bird census campaign

6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. No

7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

- The mission team has surveyed the coastal area for birds census and identification of IBA's. Finally, a National Wetland Inventory project coordinated by MedWet is under preparation.
- PhD. study on Ecology and conservation of the Little Tern. The species was removed from the list of Libyan threatened species



8. [New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.](#)
 - In the last years the WMBD was celebrating in some sites in Libya.
 - Major reforestation operation launched across Libyan territory
9. [Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats \(e.g. infrastructural development, ..\)](#)
No
10. [Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties pments, changes in legislation, etc.\).](#) No
11. [Any other information.](#) No



Kingdom of Morocco

Party Number: 42

Entry in force: November 1993

1. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans

- Finalization White-headed Duck National Action Plan
- 2nd and 3rd National count of the Vulnerable Great Bustard during the breeding season of 2019 and 2020.
- Improvement of the NBI situation in Morocco. Breeding report just released and showcase an increase in the total number of NBI which confirms the new IUCN status uplisted from CR to EN



2. Emergency situations

- Isolated cases of bird mortality have been recorded, and following which commissions have formed to investigate and perform veterinary tests. The conclusions of the reports reveal that mortalities are due to bycatch and pollution.

3. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives No

4. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species. No

- Law 29.05 on the protection of wild flora and fauna and the control of their trade, adopted in 2011, provides regulations for the introduction or reintroduction, in the natural environment, of non-native species including birds. Such transactions are subject to obtaining a permit, which includes the conditions under which these operations must be performed and precautionary measures to be taken. Each operation must be evaluated scientist.

5. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

- The implementation of the national strategy for the conservation of wetlands 2015-2024;
- The finalization of the national inventory of wetlands, which enabled the identification of 300 wetlands;
- The inclusion of 14 new wetlands on the Ramsar List bringing the total number of Ramsar sites to 38;

- The rehabilitation of some important wetlands for birds, to name only the saltworks of Lixus in Larache, the lagoon of Marchika and the lagoon of Sidi Moussa Oualidia;
 - Development and implementation of management plans for a number of Ramsar sites and Important Bird Areas (IBAs), 15 of which are being implemented at Ramsar site level;
 - The implementation of conservation actions and sustainable use of areas important for waterbirds (Sidi Moussa Oualidia, Marais de Larache, Souss Massa...);
6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. No
7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.
- The Breeding of wading Birds under anthropogenic pressure: Case of the Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* nesting in an urban area in Morocco (Beni Yakhlef, Mohammedia)
 - Distribution and Numbers of Three Globally Threatened Waterbird Species Wintering in Morocco: The Common Pochard, Marbled Teal, and White-Headed Duck
 - Conservation Amid COVID-19 Pandemic: Ecotourism Collapse Threatens Communities and Wildlife in Morocco
8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.
- Higher college of Technology Khénifra- Sultane Moulay Slimane University graduating young laureates in nature education and animation techniques with a focus on waterbirds and wetlands monitoring. A unique university education of its kind in North Africa, The school is celebrating each year the WMBD except for 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic
 - Several NGO in Morocco throughout are leading regional programs of environmental education and advocacy for the protection of waterbirds and wetlands. However, those programs were compromised because of Covid-19
9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural development, ..)
- Wetlands that are subject to extensive habitat loss and degradation due to urbanization are increasing , Local NGOs (SPANNA, GOMAC, GREPOM, Nature solutions etc..) are organizing at monthly basis sittings for their protection. All lakes are homing significant number of breeding waterbirds including Globally threatened species such as Marbled teals, Ferruginous Duck, White-headed ducks, Common Pochard, etc ..
10. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties pments, changes in legislation, etc.).
- Strengthening the legislative framework for the protection of wildlife and its habitats, including waterbirds, through:
 - The implementation of the provisions of Law 29.05 relating to the protection of species of flora and fauna and the control of their trade and its implementing decree;
 - The finalization of the implementing decree for Law 22.07 on protected areas. This regulatory text is in the process of being adopted;
 - The finalization of implementing texts for the hunting law revised in 2006, in particular the text setting the conditions and modalities for the conduct of the examination of hunting licenses. This regulatory instrument is in the adoption circuit;

- The development of an order banning the seabirds bycatch. This regulatory text adoption is underway;
- The annual update of the provisions enacted by the decree on the opening, closing and special regulation of hunting. It sets the harvest quotas for huntable species, taking into account the conservation status of each species, the periods during which hunting is authorized for each species and also the list of protected species.

11. [Any other information.](#) No

Republic of Tunisia

Party Number: 42

Entry in force: November 1993

1. [Activities to implement the AEWIA International Single Species Action Plans](#)
 2. [Emergency situations.](#)
- Illegal hunting of Migratory birds is still a problematic issue in Tunisia including migratory waterfowl



3. [New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment \(reintroduction, supplementation\) initiatives](#)
- An exceptional concentration of Greater flamingos in Sebkhet Ariana: more than 23,000 individuals. Even if the majority are adults who parade, a significant part are immatures, probably our flamingos born in the Salines de Sahline in 2017, 2019 and 2020.
4. [Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.](#) No
 5. [New or major ongoing activities on habitat \(site\) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.](#) No

6. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands. No
7. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.
 - Impacts of human activities on diversity of wintering waterbirds: Assessment in Mediterranean coastal area
 - How Habitat Features and Human Activities Shape Occurrence of the Declining Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* on a Mediterranean Coastline
8. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.
 - WMBD 2019 but not 2020 due to Covid 19
 - organized an awareness day and a cleaning action on 12/27/2020 in Sebkhet Sejoumi at the Observatory of Birds and Nature of Sebkhet Sejoumi
 - AAO / BirdLife in Tunisia participates in strengthening the sanitary surveillance of wild birds in Tunisia (REPIOM network).
9. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural development)
 - The voice of the Flamingos: to safeguard our "Habitat" in sebkhat Essijoumi.



Region of Southern Africa

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede the Agreement.

7 contracting parties/ 14 range states
New accessions: Malawi

2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report.

4 (Botswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa)

3. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA ISSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached Annex 2)

ISSAP for the Conservation of the White-winged Flufftail SOUTH AFRICA

- South Africa, through the national Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) established the National White-winged Flufftail Working Group in 2017. The main objectives of this Working Group are to, coordinate actions for the conservation of the White-winged Flufftail through the implementation of the ISSAP.
- South Africa, through DEFF, hosted and funded, the 3rd Meeting of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail International Working Group will take place from 5-7 November 2019 in Dullstroom, Mpumalanga Province. The main objectives of the meeting were to receive comprehensive country reports (South Africa and Ethiopia) on the progress of implementation of priority measures for the White-winged Flufftail on the basis of the detailed Implementation Plan agreed in 2015, receive a report on the latest research findings, revising the Implementation Plan for the next period 2020-2022, identified fundraising opportunities, election of a new chair country amongst others. 25 Delegates (SA, Ethiopia and the AEWA Secretariat) participated in this meeting.
- Nationally, DEFF coordinated several meeting with relevant stakeholders (National (DEFF, Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE); Provincial Conservation Departments where the species occur (Mpumalanga, Free State & KwaZulu-Natal - Eastern Cape) and relevant entities – SANBI and Eskom, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Private land owners such as BirdLife South Africa, Middelpunt Wetland Trust) to discuss the Implementation Plan for the next period 2020-2022.
- Below are some of the activities that are being undertaken toward the implementation of the AEWA White-winged Flufftail Implementation Plan for the next period 2020-2022.
 - A process was initiated in 2020 to designate the Bedford wetland within Ingula Nature Reserve, Free State, as a Ramsar site. The site visit has been completed and the documentation was submitted in 2020. (ISSAP activity 1.1.)
 - Discussions have been initiated to designate the Middelpunt wetland (and potentially the upper catchment of Lakenvlei) and Wakkerstroom as Ramsar sites in Mpumalanga. (ISSAP activity 1.1.)
 - The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) has initiated discussions with landowners to designate sites as protected areas – the first meetings were held in late 2020. (ISSAP activity 1.3.)
 - BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) has developed and is in the process of finalising White-winged Flufftail Habitat Best Practice Guidelines (Howes-Whitecross et al.). (ISSAP activities 1.5, 1.10 and 1.11)

- South Africa's national Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) held a first meeting with all stakeholders, including the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), and a follow-up workshop will be arranged in 2021, to discuss the protection of important sites, especially Wakkerstroom and Steenkampsberg, from development, habitat destruction and degradation. NGOs remain concerned about a proposed mining development bordering Middelpunt wetland. (ISSAP activity 1.8.)
- BLSA, the Middelpunt Wetland Trust and private landowners are pro-actively monitoring for potential development proposals that might negatively impact on the species' habitat. (ISSAP activity 1.9.)
- BLSA has continued with the camera-acoustic and transect surveys at priority sites (Middelpunt Wetland and Verloren Vallei) to identify the presence of the species at these sites, and to have a better understanding of habitat requirements. Whilst camera-acoustic data are still to be analysed, a White-winged Flufftail sighting has been confirmed at Middelpunt Wetland this past season (2020/2021). Rapid acoustic surveys were undertaken at various sites, as identified by the ecological niche model, across Mpumalanga and the Free State. Rapid acoustic surveys will take place later this month in KwaZulu-Natal. The rapid acoustic surveys of the 2019/2020 season confirmed the presence of White-winged Flufftail at Seekoeivlei, Memel, Mpumalanga. (ISSAP activities 6.1 and 8.1.)
- BLSA is expanding the distribution and corridor modelling across historic sites to evaluate the mid- to low-elevation potential distribution in South Africa and across sub-Saharan Africa. (ISSAP activity 7.1.)

ISSAP for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds

SOUTH AFRICA

- From 2-4 November 2020, BLSA facilitated the AEWA Forage Fish Workshop in collaboration with DEFF. Together with fisheries and seabird experts from Angola, Namibia and South Africa, a set of recommendations for the management of the Benguela Current's forage fish resources and their fisheries was drafted in an endeavour to ensure their long-term sustainable use as a critical food resource for seabirds. Dr A.B. Makhado, from DEFF and as Chair of the Benguela Current Commission's Top Predator Working Group, will present the recommendations to the Benguela Current Commission on behalf of South Africa.
- In collaboration with DEFF: Oceans and Coasts and the AEWA Secretariat, BLSA has scheduled a meeting of the AEWA Benguela Seabirds International Working Group for early March, 2021. Based on the evolving COVID-19 restrictions, it is currently uncertain whether the meeting will be held remotely or in person. This will be confirmed by the end of January.

ISSAP for Grey Crowned Cranes

MALAWI

- Monitoring of Grey Crowned Cranes populations in Lunyangwa and South Rukuru wetlands is planned for 2021, as part of the Biannual waterbird counts coordinated by the Wildlife and Environment Society of Malawi

SOUTH AFRICA

Activities under Objective 1: Reduce adult and juvenile mortality and loss of birds

- Through the EWT/Eskom Partnership, we aim to reduce the risk of Grey Crowned Crane collisions with overhead powerlines through the following approaches. 1. We are actively involved in EIA's related to energy infrastructure development in order to guide appropriate mitigation such as line placement/routing, line marking and line design. 2. Grey Crowned Cranes are included in the collision risk modelling completed by the EWT for Eskom in order to identify high collision risk areas within Eskom's management units, in order to guide

proactive line marking and/or the placement and mitigation of any new power lines not subject to the EIA process (132 kV or less). 3. We investigate any and all reports of Grey Crowned Crane mortality as a result of colliding with overhead power lines and propose appropriate mitigation to prevent reoccurrence. During 2020, we investigated four separate powerline incidents involving Grey Crowned Crane mortalities. These investigations resulted in subsequent mitigation, significantly reducing the risk of further collisions along the respective sections of line.

Activities under Objective 2: Increase breeding success and reproductive rates and 3: Significantly reduce further loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat

- These activities specifically refer to the protection of Grey Crowned Crane breeding sites (wetlands). The ICF/EWT partnership, several NGO's, as well as provincial conservation agencies, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), have facilitated the declaration of several protected areas under the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme that support Grey Crowned Crane breeding pairs.

Activities under Objective 4: Filling knowledge gaps

- We have completed the 28th annual aerial survey for cranes in KwaZulu-Natal. The area covered by the survey accounts for approximately 65-70% of the national population size of Grey Crowned Cranes. Over the past 10 years the Grey Crowned Crane population in their stronghold of KZN has remained stable, as seen in the figure below.

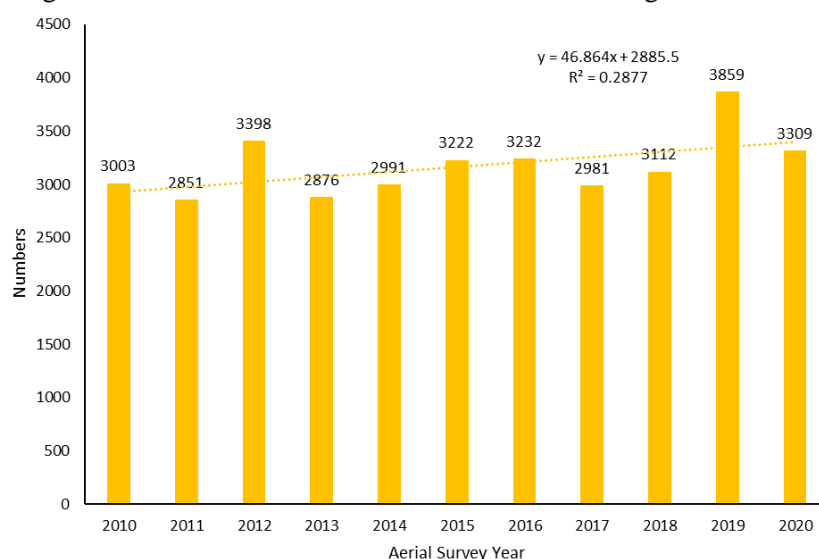


Figure 1 - The number of Grey Crowned Cranes sighted in the KZN aerial surveys from 2010-2020

- Possession of and trade in this and other indigenous crane species is being managed in Gauteng. In collaboration with the National Zoological Gardens (NZG) and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), GDARD has developed a protocol for DNA fingerprinting and parent testing of captive cranes. This initiative is intended to reduce the potential for illegally laundering wild-caught cranes through captive facilities. All captive birds are closed-ringed or micro-chipped and DNA samples are banked with the NZG. A provincial database of all captive specimens is being developed and a DNA passport (confirming captive origin) is a requirement for trade amongst permitted facilities. This relates to Action 1.3.8 of the ISSAP i.e., develop and implement an effective system to manage and control birds already in captivity. More effort is required to ensure that permitting officials adhere to the guideline for management of captive cranes and only issue permits to compliant facilities.

ZIMBABWE

- Education and awareness on the conservation of the Grey Crowned Crane (as well as the Wattled Crane) has been taking place in the Driefontein Grasslands Ramsar site during this reporting period. More than 300 villagers in Driefontein Grasslands were reached and engaged in crane conservation. Wetland habitat restoration that took place in Driefontein Grasslands in 2020 improved breeding and foraging habitats for the two crane species in Driefontein Grasslands. Fire awareness and firefighting equipment provided to villagers in Driefontein Grasslands helped reduce fire incidences in this IBA. Monitoring of both species of cranes has taken place. These initiatives, implemented by BirdLife Zimbabwe (BLZ) in collaboration with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), are funded by the Darwin Initiative.

ISSAP FOR LESSER FLAMINGO

BOTSWANA

- We are currently developing the National Lesser Flamingo Action Plan. It is still in draft, but should be completed by the end of March 2021. A working group on all waterbirds was formed in 2019 and will be reviewing the draft action plan before other stakeholders provide input.

MALAWI

- Plans are underway to monitor the Lesser Flamingo populations in Elephant Marsh and Lake Chilwa as part of the biannual waterbird counts in 2021.

ISSAP FOR SLATY EGRET

BOTSWANA

- Botswana will be hosting the first international Slaty Egret working group meeting, towards the end of third quarter (October to December 2021), provided COVID-19 restrictions will allow travelling by then.

4. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.

ZIMBABWE

- The Tropical Cyclone IDAI that hit Zimbabwe and Mozambique had also impacted on wetland-grasslands habitats of the cranes. Although the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe – in particular the Chimanimani Mountains - was highly affected, the cyclone had short-term negative impacts on the species and their open habitats in the Driefontein Grasslands. Covid-19 experienced since March 2020 had negatively impacted on the conservation efforts being implemented in Driefontein Grasslands.

SOUTH AFRICA

- **Oil spill:** On 6 July 2019, an estimated 200-400 litres of oil overflowed during a bunkering operation in Algoa Bay in the Eastern Cape, resulting in the oiling of, inter alia, 92 African Penguin adults, 17 African Penguin chicks, 13 Cape Gannets and 3 Cape Cormorants. DEFF, South African National Parks (SANParks), and the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) coordinated their responses to the spill. The impact was evaluated and an effort made to seek out and rescue affected wildlife, with oiled birds being sent to SANCCOB for cleaning, medical attention and rehabilitation. (Continued concerns regarding the threat of ship-to-ship bunkering in Algoa Bay are outlined in part 11 below.)

- **Nest abandonment - Flamingos:** Numerous problems with the water and sewerage infrastructure in Kimberley continue to pose a threat to Kamfers Dam (Northern Cape) in terms of both water quantity and water quality. In January 2019, a team of concerned citizens and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) decided that a rescue operation was necessary because the water was receding around Lesser Flamingos' nest turrets and it appeared that eggs and chicks were being abandoned. Approximately 2000 eggs and chicks were rescued and sent to various facilities for rehabilitation. As of October 2020, 546 of the rescued birds had been released at Kamfers Dam and 195 were still in captivity. Two of the 20 birds fitted with trackers are still alive and their movements are being monitored.
- **Botulism outbreak:** More recently, in January 2021, Kamfers Dam has experienced an apparent outbreak of botulism. Several AEWAs species have been impacted, including Red-knobbed Coots, Hottentot Teal and Southern Pochard. At the time of reporting, this matter had just emerged – local conservationist had collected water samples for testing and were conducting daily visits, and the provincial conservation authority had conducted an initial site visit.
- **Nest abandonment – Cape Cormorants:** Nearly 1700 endangered Cape Cormorant chicks were rescued from Robben Island in January 2021 after being abandoned by their parents. In a joint effort by the National Sea Rescue Institute, the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB), the Two Oceans Aquarium and other stakeholders, the birds were rescued after being abandoned for unknown reasons. Researchers initially thought the parents had flown out to sea to cool down due to hot weather but they failed to return. Researchers suspect the abandonment was either due to a lack of food or to heat stress.

5. New or major ongoing waterbird species re-establishment (reintroduction, supplementation) initiatives.

SOUTH AFRICA

Artificial Penguin Colony

- Measures to improve conditions for the new artificial African Penguin colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve have seen the implementation of advanced predator-proof infrastructure and technology being installed by BLSA. A risk assessment has also been drafted concerning the release of hand-reared chicks from SANCCOB in 2021 to bolster the chances of future recruitment to this colony. BLSA is currently spearheading a feasibility study to establish if artificial islands can be constructed in suitable habitat for African Penguins.

6. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.

SOUTH AFRICA

- BLSA has a longstanding partnership with government and landowners in the Western Cape to assist in the clearing of invasive alien plants (IAPs) at priority estuaries for bird conservation and key protected estuarine catchment areas along the West Coast.
- In 2020, BLSA developed the IAP Management Unit Clearing Plan for the Moutonshoek Protected Environment (PE), the major catchment area for the Verlorenvlei estuary (a Ramsar site), and in partnership with West Coast District Municipality and the Moutonshoek Landowners Association funded the clearing of more than 5km of riverbed within the PE.
- BLSA is currently set to co-fund two IAP clearing teams in 2021, working at wetlands throughout the West Coast region.

- The number and diversity of alien waterbirds that are recorded during CWAC at Gauteng wetlands is evidence that legislative requirements and/or enforcement are inadequate or ineffective. Keeping of alien waterbirds (other than those listed nationally in terms of the Alien and Invasive Species (A&IS) regulations) is not adequately controlled in all provinces. The Western Cape has a comprehensive policy on the keeping of alien waterfowl that stipulates both escape-proof enclosures and pinioning, but this is not the case everywhere. Removal of Mallards is largely ad hoc. We are not aware of a national plan for this or any other alien waterbird species.

7. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

MALAWI

- The Shire Valley Transformation Project (SVTP 2018-2023) development objective is to provide access to reliable gravity fed irrigation and drainage services, secure land tenure for smallholder farmers, and strengthen management of wetlands and protected areas in the Shire Valley especially the Elephant Marsh wetland. The focus is to establish the Elephant Marsh Sustainable Use Wetland Community Conservation Area, with a strong emphasis on community-based natural resources management strategies, based on the wetland management plan.

SOUTH AFRICA

- Under the leadership of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), South Africa is currently performing a review of all IBAs/KBAs, including those that are important for the conservation of waterbirds. This review will be finalised in 2021. BLSA aims to have all important waterbird sites declared as KBAs.
- BLSA has worked extensively over the past two years on creating a repository of habitat layers for all threatened terrestrial bird species in South Africa. These habitat models play a crucial role in identifying and highlighting the areas that are most important for the persistence of these threatened species within the country. BLSA, in collaboration with SANBI and the EWT, was able to contribute and integrate these layers into the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' national web-based environmental screening tool (<https://screening.environment.gov.za/screeningtool/#/pages/welcome>). The screening tool supports the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process by allowing developers to assess the potential sensitivity of a proposed development footprint/project areas of influence. Since October 2019, use of this tool has been a mandatory starting point for all EIAs undertaken in South Africa. In addition, the South African government has developed a series of legally-binding protocols, which prescribe minimum assessment and reporting criteria for various environmental themes (including terrestrial animal species). The protocols that need to be complied with for any particular development application are identified through the screening tool. They will strengthen South Africa's EIA process by helping to ensure that species impact assessments are conducted to a consistently high standard.
- BLSA's Western Cape Estuary Conservation Programme works with governmental and non-governmental partners to secure privately-owned and state-owned estuarine land, and important estuarine catchment area, for long-term, formal, conservation protection. In 2021, BLSA will see the declaration of a 7000 ha protected area on privately-owned land at the Berg River estuary on the West Coast, one of South Africa's most important estuaries for

conservation; this will be the first protection of its kind for the estuary. 2021 will also see the launch of BLSA's protected area expansion project at the Klein River estuary on the South Coast, which will secure threatened wetland and fynbos habitat using the Biodiversity Stewardship conservation model.

- BLSA is leading on an estuarine habitat rehabilitation and erosion mitigation pilot project at the Berg River estuary. The project includes trialing different bankside stabilisation and habitat restoration techniques at pilot sites within the estuarine functional zone. The project is being carried out in partnership with government organisations, as well as several research institutions, and will produce best practice case studies for roll out at other sites.
- Approximately 8000ha of habitat identified as important for Blue Cranes in SE Gauteng was declared a protected environment (PE) in October 2019 through the collaborative efforts of the GDARD stewardship programme and the EWT. The PE is a part of the cross-provincial, Devon Grasslands Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBBA) recognised by BLSA several years ago. The IBA regularly supports Maccoa Duck, non-breeding flocks of Black-winged Pratincole and Greater Flamingo as well as a diversity of other AEWA-listed species. A draft management plan has been developed for the Devon PE.

ZIMBABWE

- Restoration of breeding habitats of cranes has taken place in Driefontein Grasslands in 2020. A total of 9 wetland sites covering 44 ha were restored.
- Harare Wetlands Programme: The goal of the programme is to increase the voice and participation of Harare residents in the management of the City's headwater wetlands so that further loss is halted and wetlands are protected, restored, retained intact and conserved, thus providing the best opportunity for water provisioning to residents.

A three-tiered approach is being used to manage the programme:

Tier 1: National Government

Tier 2: Middle Management of Government (e.g. City of Harare, EMA)

Tier 3: Communities (residents, CSOs)

1. To influence the improvement of implementation, enforcement and strengthening of existing laws and regulations and the enactment of future laws and regulations that facilitate the protection of the environment.
2. To escalate the engagement of the leadership of Harare (political parties, Members of Parliament, councilors, Ministers and OPC, Private sector (business) and build strong relationships through lobbying, awareness raising, capacity development and negotiations.
3. To support institutions that are already engaged and tasked with the responsibility of providing water and protecting both wetlands and the environment.
4. To enhance the capacity of residents to become strategic actors in the management and preservation of wetlands in Harare through stewardship and to enforce transparency and accountability

To date the following activities have been completed:

1. Development and submission to government of Harare Ecologically Sensitive Area (Wetland) Map
2. Development and submission to government of National Wetland Guidelines
3. Submissions have also been made toward the development of the National Wetland Policy.

4. Submissions have also been made to the Portfolio Committee on Environment of the Parliament of Zimbabwe with recommendations. The committee subsequently produced its own wetland report in February 2020 where our recommendations were adopted and have been submitted to Government.
5. BLZ is also partnering with Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) on issues to do with wetland conservation and have over twenty on-going court cases to stop development on wetlands in Harare

8. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

BOTSWANA

- The Department of Wildlife and National Parks is reviewing the act that will phase out lead shot in Botswana.

SOUTH AFRICA

- In response to CMS Resolution 11.15, DEFF established a National Wildlife Poisoning Prevention Working Group. The Working Group is in process to develop the national implementation plan to assist in the coordination of wildlife poisoning at a national level. Additionally, this Working Group has in turn established a Lead Task Team – a multi-stakeholder body whose mission is to make recommendations and support the implementation of processes towards the vision that South African wildlife is not harmed by exposure to lead.
- SA Wingshooters and the South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association have both recommended that their members not shoot over wetlands with lead shot.

9. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

BOTSWANA

- Ongoing research on Wattled Cranes in the Okavango Delta. An aerial survey was completed, and a proposal is being developed, with the aim to establish population estimates of the species in the area, to study the ecological factors that affect the breeding success of the species, especially hydrology, predation and human disturbance.

MALAWI

- Wetland biodiversity monitoring programs under the Shire Valley Transformation Project (SVTP) are being undertaken.
- Annual waterbird counts, which will include monitoring of Lesser Flamingo populations in Elephant Marsh and Lake Chilwa and monitoring of Grey Crowned Cranes populations in Lunyangwa and South Rukuru wetlands in 2021.

SOUTH AFRICA

Ongoing:

- The Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC) project (currently managed by the University of Cape Town's FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithology). However, there are concerns raised that this is underfunded, and many sites are not being counted, or being counted erratically. BLSA is working with local bird clubs and other volunteers to increase the number of counts at priority estuarine/ wetland sites in the Western Cape from two to four/ annum.
- The Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2).

Benguela Seabirds

- BLSA is currently studying the movement ecology of two endangered Benguela endemic seabirds: (1) African Penguin – during and outside the breeding season; and (2) Cape Cormorant – during the breeding season.

Lesser Flamingos

- The algal concentration model developed by BLSA for Lesser Flamingos has been utilised to continually (monthly) monitor potential food availability at Kamfers Dam since December 2018.
- BLSA developed a machine learning abundance tool. In this study, commercial grade satellite imagery was developed and trained as an artificial intelligence toolset, to produce similar abundance estimates to drone and aerial imagery. The accuracy of the abundance estimation was compared to drone image results obtained in 2019 and can be extended beyond Kamfers Dam to other key breeding sites in Africa. This could produce the first spatially explicit population estimate for the species in recent years and the first scalable method of assessing population abundance across multiple sites in Africa. Core sites that will be assessed include Lake Natron (Tanzania), Etosha Pan (Namibia) and Sua Pan (Botswana).
- Other activities jointly undertaken by BLSA and Ekapa Minerals at Kamfers Dam include:
- Further water quality monitoring with regards to assessing chemical and biological components within samples.
- Assessing the fencing requirements needed to secure vulnerable Lesser Flamingo breeding areas.
- Assessing the viability and promoting the establishment of a local conservation group focused on Lesser Flamingo conservation and awareness.
- Paper published by the EWT and ESKOM on movement patterns of Lesser Flamingos (Pretorius MD, L Leeuwener, GJ Tate, A Botha, MD Michael, K Durgapersad and K Chetty. 2020. Movement patterns of lesser flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor*: nomadism or partial migration? Wildlife Biology. 10.2981/wlb.00728)

Estuarine Birds

- BLSA is leading on two research projects looking at the relationship between trends in waterbird numbers at key estuaries along the south coast, and estuarine habitat and water quality variables, including a study looking at the impact of various estuary management actions on waterbird populations.

ZIMBABWE

- Monitoring of cranes and their wetlands habitats is underway in Driefontein Grasslands. Since 2019, ground surveys of cranes are conducted in Driefontein every year.
- Waterbird counts are conducted around Zimbabwe by BLZ in January and July every year

[10. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.](#)

BOTSWANA

- Education through World Migratory Bird Day was done in October 2019 in Sehitha, a village in the Okavango district, where school children participated and relayed messages through poems, drama, songs and dances. Both primary and secondary schools participated and a trophy was given to each category, to appreciate and encourage the students as they are the leaders of tomorrow, who will be dealing with conservation in the future. The 2020 World Migratory Bird Day was celebrated virtually, with a message by the Director of Wildlife and National Parks Dr Kabelo Senyatso, and a live stream by the National Focal point, the Technical Focal Point, Agrochemicals Committee secretary, and other important stakeholders participated. A brochure on AEWA will be printed by end of March 2021 and shared with all regions, to increase awareness on waterbirds.

MALAWI

Community Institutional structures for the wetland at the Elephant Marsh were established to facilitate issues of awareness raising for sustainable use.

SOUTH AFRICA

- On 10 May 2020, The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, released a media statement in celebration of World Migratory Bird Day.
https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/worldmigratory_birdday2020
- During the COVID-19 national lockdown, BLSA has begun a series of weekly webinars (<https://www.birdlife.org.za/blsa-conversations/>), several of which have focused on AEWA species, the threats they face, and both the national and international frameworks that contribute to their conservation.
- In October 2020, BLSA ran a one-week social media campaign surrounding World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD). On the weekend of WMBD, BLSA additionally initiated a BirdLasser birding challenge, in which members of the public were tasked with recording as many migratory species as possible.
- The 2019 Flufftail Festival aimed to educate the public about the importance of water and the human activities that threaten the existence of wetlands.

ZIMBABWE

Lessons learnt under the Darwin funded project implemented by BLZ are being collated, and lessons learnt document will be produced at the end of the project.

11. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

MALAWI

SVTP irrigation tunnel development may change water levels in the marsh.

SOUTH AFRICA

- Although aspects of South Africa's EIA process have been strengthened considerably through the introduction of the national web-based environmental screening tool and associated protocols (mentioned in part 7 above), efforts are also underway to exclude certain activities from EIA requirements in order to expedite development. This is a potential concern,

depending on the areas within which exclusions are permitted and the rigour of the standards that are ultimately introduced to replace EIAs.

- Mining threats continue to be of concern for the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment in Mpumalanga. An especially significant concern at present is the threat of diamond prospecting immediately adjacent to the Middelpunt Wetland (South Africa's only confirmed breeding site for the Critically Endangered White-winged Flufftail). Prospecting activities initially commenced illegally in 2006, but were halted in 2008. A water use licence was granted for prospecting in September 2019, on the basis of which the developer maintains that it has the right to recommence prospecting. However, environmental authorisation does not yet appear to have been granted, in which case such commencement would be illegal. As noted above, DEFF has facilitated meetings with DWA, DMRE, and various other stakeholders to discuss the urgent need to protect White-winged Flufftail habitat from activities that are incompatible with this species' conservation.
- Several activities are of concern in Algoa Bay, the islands of which support breeding populations of various AEW-listed seabird species - including significant breeding colonies of African Penguins (on St Croix and Bird islands) and Cape Gannets (on Bird Island). Three operators have thus far been authorised to conduct ship-to-ship bunkering in the Bay (i.e. to transfer fuel from one vessel to another while at sea). Such operations pose a high risk of oil and fuel spills, and have considerably increased shipping traffic in the Bay. Several NGOs submitted a letter of concern regarding this matter to the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries in July 2019. In addition, BLSA (in collaboration with Nelson Mandela University, SANCCOB and the University of Paris) has begun to estimate the increase in shipping traffic since bunkering activities commenced so as to isolate the vessel types most responsible for increased traffic levels and their indirect effects on seabird habitat, such as marine noise pollution. A further concern is that authorisation was recently granted for finfish aquaculture in Algoa Bay. Several stakeholders have appealed this authorisation – including on the grounds that impacts on the African Penguin population on the St Croix Island group were neither fully investigated nor considered in decision-making. A potential future threat concerns a proposed gas-to-power powership project within the Bay, the EIA for which is currently underway.
- Two diamond prospecting applications were recently initiated for areas on the bed, banks and active channel of the Orange River, leading to concerns regarding potential impacts on the already-degraded Orange River Mouth IBA. A full EIA has yet to be conducted for this project.
- Critical legislation for priority wetlands in South Africa is incomplete, e.g., Ecological Water Reserve Study and Resource Quality Objectives (RQOs) for the Verlorenvlei estuary;
- Lack of understanding around impacts of groundwater extraction on wetlands/ estuaries;
- Insufficient/ poor long-term planning re. future water availability, particularly for Cape Town metropole;
- Approval of dam and other infrastructure in already overwhelmed river/ estuarine catchment areas, where additional extraction and/ or changes in flow regimes, will result in the degradation and loss of critical wetland/ estuarine habitat – with knock on effects for biodiversity and the economy e.g., fishing industry, tourism etc

ZIMBABWE

- Zimbabwe has largely endured drought in the last three years. In that time, Zimbabwe's fragile wetland ecosystems in the rural areas have been encroached by human activity, i.e., agriculture (crops, cows, goats) and infrastructural development.

- Under lockdown in 2020 the Chimanimani Mountains were invaded by artisanal miners conducting alluvial mining in the Bundi river montane wetland
- Over 50% of Harare's ecologically sensitive headwater wetland ecosystem has been destroyed by infrastructural development. Urban agriculture is degrading the remaining wetlands in the City and causing the siltation of the catchment dam, Lake Chivero by 20%. Government is working on an Ecologically Sensitive Area Map of Harare, National Wetland Guidelines and a Wetland Policy. BLZ has contributed submissions to these documents and also submitted recommendations to reinforce environmental legislation.

12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines as per Section 3 of Annex 2)

SOUTH AFRICA

- South Africa has been using some aspects of the "Guidelines on the preparation of National Single Species Action Plans for migratory waterbirds". This is applicable for the White-winged Flufftail and the Grey Crowned Cranes ISSP, which are under implementation.
- There is a call for better dissemination of the guidelines within the country (especially new or updated guidelines)

13. Any other information.

BOTSWANA

The review of Wildlife and National Parks Act will highly consider any gaps in the protection of AEWA species.

SOUTH AFRICA

- DEFF has initiated a process to develop a national AEWA-implementation plan. An initial stakeholder workshop was held in February 2020. Subsequent activities were delayed – in part, because of the national lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. At the request of DEFF, BLSA has, however, begun to develop a template for the plan and aims to finalise this by the end of February 2021. It is envisaged that this will be followed by a gap analysis of South Africa's implementation efforts, based on the country's completed national reports to the next Meeting of the Parties. Thereafter, a workshop of key stakeholders and experts will refine and prioritise national actions for improved implementation of the Agreement in South Africa.
- In 2020, BLSA appointed an East Atlantic Flyway Initiative (EAFI) Project Manager, who will assist in the southern African region with the identification of threats to priority bird species and sites along the flyway, the delineation of KBAs, the safeguarding of these sites, and fundraising for priority projects along the East Atlantic Flyway. Under the EAFI Project, an effort is being made to, inter alia, build capacity in BirdLife country partners in southern Africa to support their national focal points in improving the implementation of international instruments, including AEWA. In addition, BLSA provides support to partners challenging development applications in their countries which pose a threat to AEWA species and other avifauna (a recent example being the proposed Batoka Gorge hydro-electric scheme in Zimbabwe).

ZIMBABWE

Community livelihood improvement through provision of alternative sources of income generating activities to communities to help curb wetland loss is being demonstrated in Driefontein Grasslands. This project implemented by BLZ and its partners, funded by the Darwin Initiative seeks to balance wetland biodiversity conservation and community livelihood improvement in the Driefontein Grasslands.

Region of Eastern Africa

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede to the Agreement.
 - i. *There are 13 Contracting Parties in the region with 3 yet to accession*
 - ii. *No New Accessions*
 - iii. *There were no actions by the Regional representative to encourage non-party range states to accede to the Agreement*
2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report.
 - i. *Only 2 countries Kenya and Uganda provided feedback. Rwanda responded to correspondence but eventually did not send their report.*
 - ii. *Dr Osman Gedow send in comments from Somalia*
 - iii. *Additional information for the report was provided by BirdLife International Africa Secretariat*
3. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA ISSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached Annex 2)
 - i. ***Lesser Flamingo:*** *BirdLife International and Nature Tanzania has just completed a Darwin-Initiative funded Ecotourism project on Lake Natron titled. “Developing a Community Based Ecotourism Model at Lake Natron, Tanzania”. In summary, the project helped build capacity of local communities to carry out ecotourism business and improved their livelihoods. There was evidence of increased monthly incomes for all gender - women, youth and men. The Community Revolving Fund did very well, with the seed funding provided by Darwin growing by 17% from £6,500 to £7,608. Local communities, stakeholders, government agencies and tourism business operators developed and have a Tourism Development Plan (TDP) to guide ecotourism investment into the future. The TDP is a document of the Government of Tanzania. Habitats were restored with 7,500 trees planted with most of them surviving and 10,000 hectares of wetland protected. Most critically, Lake Natron continues to be the breeding site for Lesser Flamingos in Eastern Africa – with the project recording one of the highest number of flamingos (2.7million individuals) in the region, since 1995. Lastly, the project built massive goodwill and cooperation amongst stakeholders - with the*

- foundations and networks for future conservation, ecotourism and livelihoods building at Lake Natron being firmly laid.*
- ii. **Grey Crowned Crane (Kenya):** *The Development of National Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of Grey Crowned Crane led by KWS and ICF/EWT/CANCO Partnership as well as NMK, NEMA, is ongoing. The plan will be ready for implementation by May/June 2021. When the process is concluded a Kenya Grey Crowned Crane working group will be constituted. The crane conservation volunteers (CCV) is designing an annual productivity monitoring program at L. Ol bolossat stating this year.*
 - iii. *The 1st MEETING OF THE AEWA GREY CROWNED-CRANE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP 24-26 July 2019, Entebbe, Uganda. Country Reports of GCC conservation activities were presented at the meeting*
 - iv. **Madagascar Pond Heron.** *A paper published in 2020 (Rabarisoa, Rivo, Ramanampamonjy, Julien, Razafindrajao, Felix, De Roland, Lily-Arison Rene, Jeanne, François, et al. 2020 Status Assessment and Population Trends of the Madagascar Pond-Heron (Ardeola idae) from 1993-2016. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1675/063.043.0105>). Summarises the population trends of the species from 1993-2016 in Mayotte Island. The data includes 4 breeding sites in Mayotte. There are about 121 breeding pairs in Mayotte. An increase from 20 pairs from 2003. The paper reports that poaching is a major threat*
 - v. **Grey Crowned Crane (Uganda)** *The National Single Species Action Plan for the Grey crowned crane has been developed. The initial processes to develop one for the Shoebill are under way. However as much as the resources to develop these action plans can easily be mobilized, implementation of different strategies and actions in the NSSAPs is challenged by the other available competing priorities in the face of the limited resources*
4. Emergency situations (extreme cold, draught, toxic or oil spills, etc.) that have occurred and have affected waterbirds and/or their habitats since the last TC meeting and response to them.
 - i. There were no emergency situations reported in the region
 5. Activities on eradication or other type of action regarding alien species.
 - ii. **Lake Bogoria Kenya:** *Due to the rise in water levels, the lakes shoreline is now fringed by the invasive Prosopis. Flamingos using shallow shorelines are dying when they get entangled in the prosopis bushes. 400 dead flamingos were counted in a small section during Jan 2021 counts*
 - iii. **Lake Olbolossat, Kenya:** *influx of nutria Myocastor coypus population at Lake Ol' Bolossat leading to loss of emergent vegetation in the lake. Thus, facilitating the widespread invasion of the lake by coverage of Salvinia molesta. A study has been proposed to examine the impacts of this influx of Nutria*
 6. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.
 - i. **Lake Natron, Tanzania:** *The Darwin Initiative funded project restored habitat around the lake with 7500 trees planted and 10000ha of wetland protected*

- ii. **Lake Naivasha, Kenya:** Restoration of the northern swamps of Lake Naivasha by Marula Estate. Reports available: <https://docplayer.net/25743287-Lake-naivasha-wetland-rehabilitation-project-northern-swamp-regeneration.html>). The Plan is to restore the 1350 ha of swamp that was reduced to 450ha. Following the ongoing restoration Grey Crowned Crane have been recorded nesting there

9. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

- i. Kenya- Annual Rift Valley lakes Waterbird counts Jan. 2020

Rift Valley Lake	Total waterbirds counted	Number of species
Lake Bogoria	171609	39
Lake Baringo	2110	47
Lake Nakuru	17276	72
Lake Eleminteita	19764	58
Lake Naivasha	9756	74
Lake Magadi	15568	42
Total	236083	

Very low numbers of waterbirds were recorded during the January 2020 waterbird counts. The absence of Flamingos was apparent.

10. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

- ii. **Lake Elemeinteita, Kenya:** A new 220KV transmission line causing Flamingo death by collision. Wildlife Direct Kenya submitted an IRP Information Sheet to AEWA and UNESCO. The site is also a UNESCO world Heritage site inscribed in 2011 as the Kenya Lake System. A consortium of Kenyan state agencies comprising of Ketraco, NMK, NEMA and KWS was formed to look at the issue. A report was published with recommendation to do 1 year monthly survey of bird movements and come up with mitigation measures

13. Any other information.

- i. **Somalia** Somalia is war-ravaged country and all institution are very weak to implement any international agreements but there are pockets that are important for the conservation

waterbirds in Somalia, such as the coastal environment, riverine areas, the marshland in the Southern regions, and larger rain harvesting infrastructures from Somaliland and Puntland that emerged from the need to accommodate the increased precipitation of the Horn of Africa due to climatic change.

ii. **Uganda**

- *Wetland demarcation is currently ongoing in Uganda.*
- *The government is currently planning a water bird monitoring programme to facilitate continuous update on the status of bird populations.*
- *Where possible Uganda as a party should be considered in any available ISSAPs related implementation projects especially of key charismatic species such as the grey crowned crane, shoe bill stock and the lesser flamingo*

i. **Kenya-**

- *Management Plans for Lake Bogoria and Lake Elmenteita have been completed and ready for implementation*
- *Lake Ol bolossat was gazetted as protected wetland*
- *The Strategic Environmental Assessment process for Wind Energy in Kenya is now at the public participation stage.*

Region of Western Africa

1. Number of Contracting Parties in the region / number of Range States in the region. New accessions since the previous TC meeting. Actions by the regional representative to encourage non-party Range States to accede the Agreement.

In total we have 16 Contracting Parties on the WESTERN AFRICA

2. Number of Range States (Parties and non-party Range States) that provided feedback for this report.

Six of them provided feedback for this report: Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, The Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Togo.

3. Activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA ISSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached Annex 2)

We have about activities to implement the AEWA International Single Species Action Plans relevant to the region (please check for the AEWA ISSAP as per Sections 1&2 of attached Annex 2):

Gambia

- Conservation and protection of Black Tailed Godwit (sub regional Plan and African plan of Action)
- Annual Water bird census 2020
- Habitat restoration (non was conduct around the habitats due to COVID-19 pandemic).

Ghana

- Monthly monitoring of species numbers along feeding and roosting segments of the wetlands
- Enforcement of L.I, byelaws and traditional conservation practices that protect migratory species
- Habitat enhancement activities to promote species feeding and roosting activities

- Conservation education and participatory awareness in schools and communities
- Collaboration with NGO's to undertake joint monitoring
- Capacity building of Wildlife Division staffs to protect species and their habitat.
- Formation of conservation clubs in schools and communities to protect migratory species.
- Seek extra funding (external) to support species conservation activities
- Seek partnership beyond funding for collaboration and knowledge sharing in species conservation

Guinea-Bissau:

- Monitoring of Black Tailed Godwit (sub regional Plan and African plan of Action)

Togo has implemented activities:

- Management Plan (MP) of the downstream Mono and the related coastal strip;
- Haho River and Lake Boko/Zowla Management Plan;
- Akissa Sacred Forest Action and Management Plan (PAG);
- Actions to restore mangrove forests in Southeast Togo
- Actions for the rehabilitation of riverbanks throughout the country through the implementation of projects (WACA, PALCC, Forest Landscape Restoration).

7. New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

New or major ongoing activities on habitat (site) inventory, conservation or restoration and rehabilitation of waterbird habitats.

Ghana:

- Planting of *Avecennia marina* species along banks of creeks and marshy areas to improve feeding and roosting activities
- Clearing of blocked creeks of weeds and silting materials to enhance flow of water to feeding areas

Bissau-Guinea:

- Habitat inventory,
- Conservation or restoration of habitats in the process of degradation.

Gambia:

- Conservation and restoration have happening around several of the key migratory stop over and wintering areas very actively except for the year 2020.

Togo:

- Sensitization of local communities on the conservation or restoration of wetlands during the descent of conservation actors on the ground that was done.
- Mangrove restoration activities funded by WACA
- Forest Landscape Restoration under LACAP funding

Côte d'Ivoire: The activities aimed at knowing the habitats of water birds and their rehabilitation have been carried out at the national level. Thus:

- June 9, 2019: Reforestation of waterbird habitats in Adiaké (south-eastern Côte d'Ivoire); mangroves were planted as part of an activity entitled "Environment and local development";

- June 25-29, 2019: a data collection on wetlands using drones at the Fresco Ramsar site (city southeast of the IC). The objective of this activity was to collect information on the state of this wetland for better conservation of waterbird habitats.
- July 22-26, 2019: Awareness raising focused on waterbirds and their habitats was carried out. This awareness raising activity was carried out among the populations of eight villages bordering the sites hosting waterbirds. Good conservation actions were provided and leaflets were distributed to them, as well as practical exercises were carried out.
- From 17 to 19 January 2020: a waterbird count in 15 sites in the country of the 17th with a team of 46 people of different specialties (Ornithologists, Technical Agents of Water and Forests, NGO members and volunteers).

Senegal: The establishment of new conservation areas for waterbirds such as:

- the Urban Reserve of the Grande Niaye de Pikine,
- the Protected Marine Area of Kaloulal Blouf Fogny,
- The Marine Protected Area of Gorée allows the conservation of waterfowl habitats.

The actions of fighting against the invasive plants that colonize the bodies of water in the Djoudj allow the rehabilitation of habitats for the thousands of birds that frequent the Djoudj.

8. Progress of the region in phasing out the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands.

- In Guinea-Bissau, the hunting of migratory species is absolutely prohibited by current legislation on hunting (or even wildlife). Moreover, hunters are not interested in these species that do not carry good meat.
- New wildlife and biodiversity Act revised and yet to be ratified by the Gambia National Assembly
- Hunting in wetlands in Togo is done by local communities with traditional means and is more focused on mammals than birds. However, some hunters continue to use lead shot for hunting.
- Since 1974, a Ministerial Order has been promulgated to close the hunting season in Côte d'Ivoire. Since then, it is assumed that the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands is also banned. However, no scientific studies have been carried out to this effect in order to monitor and evaluate such a ministerial decision.
-

9. New or major ongoing research and monitoring activities on waterbirds and waterbird habitats.

- At the level of Guinea-Bissau, research and surveillance activities are carried out in areas where devastating actions are of concern.
- At the Gambia level, annual Waterbird census will soon commence of course little bit late as compared to last year. And a new strategic plan for 2021 just completed
- Chenal de Gbaga, the Akissa sacred forest and the Afito ponds, which are key sites for biodiversity conservation in the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, benefit from community-based monitoring by local communities and protection as a protected area in Togo's wetlands.
- Research work has been undertaken in some wetlands of Côte d'Ivoire, notably in the classified forest of N'ganda Nganda in 2006; in the Ehotilés Islands in 2010; in Grand-

Bassam in 2014 and in the lakes of Yamoussoukro in 2015. These various works have been published in scientific journals. However, no specific scientific studies have been undertaken on key species cited in annexes (1 or 2) aimed at developing an action plan at the national level. This could provide potential information on their biology and ecology in their respective habitats.

- In Senegal, the work of master's and thesis students on the behavior of the crowned crane, the spoonbill and the stilts allows to reinforce the knowledge on water birds and their habitat.

10. New or major ongoing education and information activities on waterbirds, waterbird habitats and the Agreement.

Ghana:

- Association school project – education in schools and training of selected school kids to identify and count birds during wintering season
- Night film shows in community on conservation laws, protection of bird species on our flyway during the wintering season and beyond
- Durbar / exhibition and radio talk shows on migratory bird days.

Guinea-Bissau:

- Media Awareness Workshops
- Improved coverage in the press, production of communication tools, publicity materials, film on the mangroves of Guinea-Bissau.

Gambia:

- Strategic plan/ National Action Plan 2020 Ministerial retreat ended last week

Togo:

- The training of 20 students in Master Ecology and Wildlife Management of the University of Lomé on the identification and monitoring of migratory waterbirds from 04-05 November 2019.
- Awareness-raising of the communities

Côte d'Ivoire:

Most of the activities carried out are focused on waterbird counts. Apart from the activities from July 22 to 26, 2019, no other new and important ongoing waterbird education and/or information activities are reported. Certainly, initiatives are being carried out, but no formal communication is made on this subject.

Senegal:

Important communication activities relayed by the Senegalese media are carried out during the days dedicated to waterbirds and wetlands.

11. Problematic cases threatening waterbirds or their habitats (e.g. infrastructural developments, changes in legislation, etc.).

Ghana:

- Expansion and creation of new salt ponds and pans
- Expansion of aquaculture development activities

Guinea-Bissau:

Construction of human dwellings in wetlands, voluntary pollution of bird habitats.

Gambia:

infrastructural development in certain areas have immensely threatened areas such as Tanbi Wetland Nation Park

Togo:

- Pollution from household garbage, destruction and/or degradation of habitats and hunting are the main threats to migratory waterbirds and wetlands.
- Infilling of water bodies for commercial or transport infrastructure purposes.

Côte d'Ivoire:

Concerning threats affecting waterbirds or their habitats at the national level, no scientific data are available. If they exist, certainly they are not yet published. All the more reason to undertake a project to know the factors threatening waterbirds and their habitats in Côte d'Ivoire.

12. Extent of use of the AEWA Conservation Guidelines by the parties (please check for the AEWA Conservation Guidelines as per Section 3 of Annex 2)

Ghana:

- Focal person liaising with Ministry of Environment, Environmental Protection Agency, Wildlife Society, Center for Africa wetlands to form research and conservation groups.

Guinea-Bissau:

Degree of use of the AEWA conservation guidelines is normal and reasonable and it is in function of the existing means within our working institutions in Guinea Bissau.

Gambia:

The Gambia is aware of the AEWA and CMS conservation Guidelines and all agreement has been seriously taken care of in the recent wildlife and Biodiversity Act which is on the process of being ratified.

Côte d'Ivoire:

At this level, it should be noted that since the report for the period 2015-2017 relating to Contracting Parties including Côte d'Ivoire, the legislation in force only takes into account part of the AEWA guidelines (unless amended) relating to national legislation for the protection of migratory waterbird species and their habitats. Certainly, the legislation is currently being reviewed and revised to incorporate AEWA obligations. But for the time being, no further official or public statements have been made to this effect.

This would mean that much remains to be done on the conservation of migratory waterbirds, which are shared and potential biological resources that can generate deviations to our country if guidelines are well developed and promulgated or popularized.

Senegal:

The Prohibition of the Use of Low Micron Plastics Act helps to reduce the pollution of water bodies by birds, as recommended in the Key Site Management Guidelines for Migratory Waterfowl (TS #18).

13. Any other information.

- Wetlands International Africa Western Coast and Gulf of Guinea (WIACO) in collaboration with WSFI and BLI support the International Waterbird Census (IWC) at the region.
- Wetlands International Africa Western Coast and Gulf of Guinea (WIACO) support 5 students to work on Bird and their habitat.
- They contribute at the celebration on WMBD and WWD
- Environnemental education primary school and university
- Support network implementation
- Building capacity subregional actors
- Support on endowment of materiel

Appendix II – List of Participants

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS - REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES		
Representative	Position/Organisation/Institution	Contact Information
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