



AEWA BENGUELA COASTAL SEABIRDS INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP



1st Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group

3-4 March 2021, online via GoToMeeting

MEETING REPORT

1. Introduction

The 1st Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabird International Working Group took place online between the 3rd and 4th March 2021. The meeting was organized by the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa with funding provided by the Government of the United Kingdom through its Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The primary aim of the meeting was to establish international coordination for the implementation of the International Multi-species Action Plan (IMSAP) for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds which was adopted by the 6th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA in November 2015. The focus of this first meeting of the IWG will be to agree on critical conservation activities to be implemented as a matter of priority including discussions on options for funding such activities.

2. Opening and Welcome

Azwianewi Makhado from the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) opened the meeting and welcomed participants on behalf of the host government of South Africa followed by Alistair McInnes from BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) and Nina Mikander from the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Azwianewi Makhado (DEFF) presented the agenda (document BCS IWG 1.1 Rev 1). There were no requests for changes to the agenda or for any other business.

Decision: *The agenda was adopted with no changes.*

4. Admission of observers

Decision: *Tunehafo Gottlieb from the Benguela Current Convention and Rima Jabado from UNEP/CMS as outlined in the preliminary participants list (document BCS IWG Inf. 1.2) were admitted as observers to the Working Group.*

5. International Working Group Terms of Reference

Nina Mikander (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) presented the Working Group Terms of Reference (document BCS IWG Inf. 1.3), based on the generic Terms of Reference for AEWA International Species Working Groups developed by the AEWA Technical Committee.

6. Update on the coordination and budget of the IWG

Nina Mikander (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) and Alistair McInnes (BLSA) gave an update on the status of Working Group membership and coordination.

7. Overview and update on the status of the Benguela Coastal Seabirds

Christina Hagen (BLSA) presented an overview of current knowledge of the status of, and threats faced by the nine seabird species (African Penguin, Bank Cormorant, Cape Cormorant, Cape Gannet, African Oystercatcher,

The AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group was convened under the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) in order to coordinate implementation of the International Multi-species Action Plan for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds. The group comprises governmental and other representatives of the following Principal Range States: Angola, Namibia and South Africa as well as invited observers.

Crowned Cormorant, Damara Tern, Caspian Tern and Greater Crested Tern) under the auspices of the Working Group. Since drafting the IMSAP for the Conservation of Benguela Current Upwelling System Coastal Seabirds in 2014/15, the conservation status of the Cape Gannet and Damara Tern have been uplisted from 'Near-threatened' to 'Endangered' and 'Vulnerable', respectively. However, the conservation status of the African Oystercatcher has been downlisted to 'Least Concern'.

8. Summary on the conservation efforts and implementation of the IMSAP

Jessica Kemper (Namibia), Azwianewi Makhado (South Africa) and Christina Hagen (South Africa) gave a summary on the status of species and conservation efforts and implementation of the IMSAP within their respective countries. Due to internet connectivity and language translation issues, the Angolan delegate (Jose António Dianguessa) was unable to present the corresponding information for Angola.

Discussion (main points only):

Management of forage fish stocks

During the AEWA Benguela Current Forage Fish Workshop held during November 2020, participants and specialist scientists from Angola, Namibia and South Africa developed and agreed on a set of recommendations for the management of the Benguela Current's forage fish resources.

There are marine spatial planning initiatives in South Africa to identify Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas and potential Marine Protected Areas.

Monitoring of the sardine stock and the composition of seabird diet is hampered in Namibia due to lack of funds and capacity. Further, it is uncertain whether the moratorium on sardine fishing will be extended in Namibia during 2022 and there is a lack of co-operative management of this stock between Namibia and Angola.

Reduce fisheries bycatch of Cape Gannets

Most fisheries where seabird bycatch is a risk are required to employ mitigation techniques, such as bird scaring lines, within Namibian and South African waters. However, there are no equivalent regulations for pelagic longline fisheries in Namibia.

Minimize displacement and predation at colonies

South African islands and Mercury, Ichaboe and Possession islands in Namibia have been staffed to monitor seal and gull predation, with problematic seals and gulls being culled.

A predator-proof fence and monitoring is in place at the attempted new African Penguin colony site at De Hoop Nature Reserve in South Africa.

Predatory Great White Pelicans are continuously monitored and chased from the Cape Gannet colony at Malgas Island, South Africa.

Minimize disturbance to colonies by construction and recreational activities

Disturbance to breeding seabirds is kept to a minimum by restricting access to all colonies within the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area (NIMPA) and South Africa.

Reduce seabird deaths due to pollution

South Africa has drafted a National Oiled Wildlife Preparedness Response and Contingency Plan, which is an Annexure to the National Oil Spill Contingency plan. The wildlife response component is currently lacking within the Namibian oil spill contingency plan.

Rehabilitation centers in South Africa regularly rescue and rehabilitate oiled seabirds.

Minimize the impact of sea-level rise on population size

Mitigation measures against storm events have been incorporated into colony plans by colony managers within South Africa. Currently, no such measures are in place in Namibia. A climate change workshop was held in 2019 but this should be expanded upon.

Fill knowledge gaps on the impacts of threats, especially relating to mining and gillnets

No formal research or monitoring has been undertaken to investigate the impacts of mining or gillnet on seabirds in South Africa and Namibia. However, seabirds are usually considered within Environmental Impact Assessments in both countries and South Africa has conducted research into the impacts of seismic surveys on African Penguins.

Emerging threats to Benguela coastal seabirds

The following activities were identified as emerging or expanding threats to Benguela coastal seabirds, including details of associated threats in parenthesis:

- At-sea ship-to-ship bunkering (oil pollution and increased vessel traffic)
- Coastal industrial development (habitat destruction and oil pollution)
- Port expansion (increased shipping traffic, disturbance and pollution)
- Seismic surveys (disturbance or displacement of birds and/or their prey)
- Marine phosphate mining (habitat destruction and/or disturbance, prey displacement and pollution)
- Mariculture (entanglement, displacement of natural fauna, disturbance, changes to natural habitat and pollution)
- Finfish aquaculture (pollution, habitat displacement, alien invasive fish, collision risks to Cape Gannets)
- Alien invasive barnacles (habitat degradation and displacement for African Black Oystercatcher)
- Offshore windfarms (collisions and habitat displacement)
- Powerships (noise and oil pollution).

9. Development of a workplan for the Benguela Coastal Seabird International Working Group

The Working Group then discussed and prioritized MSAP activities for Benguela Current coastal seabird species within eight categories: (i) forage fish availability, (ii) bycatch, (iii) displacement and predation at colonies, (iv) human disturbance at colonies, (v) pollution, (vi) sea level rise, (vii) knowledge gaps and (viii) emerging threats.

Decision: *The agreed priority activities were included in the draft workplan 2021-2025¹ which will be circulated to the meeting participants for comments together with the draft meeting report.*

10. Fundraising for activities

Nina Mikander (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) provided an overview of fundraising opportunities for discussion.

11. Next Meeting

Nina Mikander (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat) proposed to hold regular virtual IWG meetings to discuss the progress of the MSAP and its ongoing activities outlined within the draft workplan.

Decision: *The 2nd Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabird IWG will be coordinated by Tegan Carpenter-Kling (IWG coordinator) to occur within a year and will most likely take place virtually.*

12. Meeting closure

Azwianewi Makhado (DEFF) thanked all participants for their active participation in the meeting, followed by Alistair McInnes (BLSA) and Nina Mikander (UNEP/AEWA Secretariat).

¹ See Annex 1

Annex 1: Rolling Work Plan 2021-2025 – AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group¹

Forage Fish Availability

Objective 1. To manage anchovy and sardine stocks so that they recover to and do not fall below ecologically meaningful thresholds for longer periods than may occur in unexploited states and are not harmfully depleted at key breeding and non-breeding feeding grounds						
Action in the MSAP	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result: 1.1. Forage fish stocks have recovered to agreed levels						
1.1.1. Implement the identified ecologically meaningful biomass/availability thresholds for forage fish stocks as they relate to seabird foraging requirements. <i>(High)</i>	ALL	2021	BCC	a) Promote the implementation of the relevant Forage Fish Workshop recommendations in all three countries <i>(High)</i>	n/a	Much progress has been made on the original activity foreseen in the Action Plan (<i>Identify further ecologically meaningful biomass thresholds for forage fish stocks as they relate to seabird foraging requirements</i>). Hence agreed to revise action to focus on implementation of the thresholds identified.
	South Africa	<i>Immediate</i> – inputs must be provided by the end of 2021	DFFE	b) Integrate thresholds into the operational management procedures (OMP2022) for fisheries in South Africa <i>(Essential)</i>	n/a	
	Namibia	<i>Immediate</i> – window of opportunity to push for the revision and adoption during 2021-2022	Relevant ministry	c) Revise and adopt a new national Sardine Stock Management Plan for Namibia <i>(Essential)</i>	Dedicated person needed to push this: Outside assistance required/ FAO	
1.1.2. Support Angola to manage fish stocks and pressures on fish stocks (human fishing pressure and other impacts such as seals). This requires dedicated research to understand fisheries and predator-prey interactions. <i>(Medium)</i>				<i>[For consideration by Angola]</i>	YES – part of FAO/GIZ/UNDP UNEP (or other donor) project on fisheries, bycatch etc.	

¹ Developed at the 1st Meeting of the AEWA Benguela Coastal Seabirds International Working Group on 3-4 March 2021 (virtual format) and approved by correspondence in June 2021.

Objective 1. To manage anchovy and sardine stocks so that they recover to and do not fall below ecologically meaningful thresholds for longer periods than may occur in unexploited states and are not harmfully depleted at key breeding and non-breeding feeding grounds						
Action in the MSAP	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
1.1.3. Use existing data on thresholds to manage fisheries accordingly (e.g., reduced quotas, closed seasons/areas as appropriate, including through a fisheries management plan). <i>(Medium)</i>	ALL	Longer term	BirdLife South Africa	a) Demonstrate actual fish depletion by carrying out frequent fish surveys (drones) etc. <i>(Medium)</i>	Yes	Might be critical data to have but may be unrealistic to find funding for this in the short term. Look for opportunities to implement this as part of larger international efforts.
	ALL	Rolling, as appropriate		b) Integrate this activity into each national fish stock management plan, where appropriate.	tbc	
1.1.4. Undertake fisheries management strategy evaluation by externals on a regular basis. <i>(Medium)</i>	ALL	2021	BCC, Coordinator, AEWA Secretariat	a) Encourage the re-establishment of external evaluations in each relevant management agency.	tbc	External evaluations of fisheries management strategies have previously taken place but are no longer routinely carried out in all countries. Through the BCC Fisheries Working Group, there is an ongoing review of the fisheries management strategies in the region. However, it is unclear whether this constitutes an external review.
Result 1.2. Spatial management implemented						
1.2.1. Establishment of a bilateral Angola-Namibia stock assessment and management working group to coordinate the development and implementation of spatial management plans for shared fish stocks. <i>(High)</i>	Angola, Namibia	2022 (depending on progress made in Namibia on National Plan)	BCC	a) Reach an agreement on the management of shared fish stocks between Namibia and Angola via the BCC, following the development and adoption of the Namibian National Plan for the Management of Pelagic Fish Resources (see 1.1.1 above). <i>(Essential)</i> <i>linked to action 1.1.2 above</i>	Outside assistance required/ FAO	No bilateral working group has been established to date, but an agreement between the countries urgently needs to be reached. Otherwise, protective measures implemented by Namibia will continue to be thwarted by increased fishing in Angola.
1.2.2. Establish transboundary collaboration for coherent MPA networks to be established in	ALL	ongoing	BCC, Coordinator	a) Ensure that the ongoing process facilitated by the BCC on the establishment of	n/a	Ongoing collaboration through BCC on the establishment

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Action in the MSAP	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
the region, including pelagic/offshore MPAs for fishery management and seabird conservation purposes. Ensure that these contribute to national CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets for protected areas <i>(Medium)</i>				transboundary EBSAs continues and areas critical for foraging seabirds are identified and protected therein.		Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs). Discussion in the group concluded that EBSAs fulfil most of the same functions as MPAs – apart from differing in their legal status.
1.2.3. South Africa to implement revised quota system taking into account the presence of two sardine stocks to reduce risk of localised depletion. <i>(High)</i>	South Africa	rolling	DFFE, BirdLife South Africa	a) Encourage fully completing the implementation of the revised quota system, including by integrating it into the OMPs.	n/a	Work in progress, provision for spatial management in permit process etc. But still work to be done.
Result 1.3. Science and ecosystem considerations are integrated into fisheries management, quota setting and recovery planning						
1.3.1. Increase scientific capacity (e.g., fill posts with appropriately qualified and experienced personnel and create new posts as required). <i>(High)</i>	ALL	tbc	Coordinator	a) Increase best-practice and knowledge exchange within the region and beyond as a short-cut to increasing capacity.	FAO could provide support as part of a larger project	Discussion on the fact that the IWG and its members are not necessarily in a position to create new posts etc.
	ALL	tbc	Coordinator	b) Explore need for local/regional capacity building activities amongst fisheries management officials at all levels.	FAO could provide support as part of a larger project	However, there are still opportunities to increase capacity within the framework of projects for example.
	ALL	tbc	DFFE	c) Look for opportunities to increase capacity for example in the BCC Secretariat on short to medium-term basis through a consultancy or secondment linked to an existing programme/project (EBSAs etc. should be linked together)	YES – although could be in-kind, if staff seconded from a government post for example	Also discussed that not only purely scientific capacity is needed, could also be conservation practitioner etc.

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Action in the MSAP	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
1.3.2. Integrate research programmes into building management capacity and vice versa; build stronger links between academic marine research initiatives to management. Promote collaborative research between national and international bodies. <i>(Medium)</i>	South Africa (but possibly with benefits for the other range states)	By 2022	Coordinator, BirdLife South Africa, Species Experts	a) Explore stronger collaboration with the Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR) at Nelson Mandela University	n/a	Not considered a top priority. Some collaboration between research programmes/initiatives and management already exist but there is always room for improvement if there are opportunities.
1.3.3. Promote the influence of scientific advice in fisheries management through inclusion of ecosystem approaches in decision-making processes. <i>(Medium)</i>	South Africa	tbc	DFFE, BirdLife South Africa	a) Contribute to the final recommendations being compiled once the South African Island closure experiment ends.	DFFE will need outside support for assessing the recommendations.	There are many examples of ongoing processes where scientific advice is being taken into consideration in the development of fisheries management (at least in South Africa).
			DFFE, BirdLife South Africa	b) Need for socio-economic study. – new action	Funding needed for study	
	South Africa, Namibia	2021	Coordinator, AEWA Secretariat	c) Submit recommendation from the International Working Group to the relevant government authorities in Namibia and South Africa requesting that the national Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Working Groups be re-established. - <i>Coordinator to draft letter in consultation with Namibian and South African IWG members; agree whether it should be sent by the IWG Chair or the AEWA Secretariat – as appropriate.</i> - <i>Could also be included in a broader communication to fisheries departments and other parts of</i>	n/a	

Objective 1. To manage anchovy and sardine stocks so that they recover to and do not fall below ecologically meaningful thresholds for longer periods than may occur in unexploited states and are not harmfully depleted at key breeding and non-breeding feeding grounds						
Action in the MSAP	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
				<i>government on IWG Meeting outcomes.</i>		
Result 1.4. Controlled fishing zones are established around key breeding localities, where appropriate, to avoid local depletion						
1.4.1. Investigations and reports or scientific papers published describing core foraging areas during different stages for each species, in collaboration with other range states especially those on Damara Tern migration routes. <i>(High)</i>	ALL	2022-2025	Jean-Paul Roux, Namibia Nature Foundation	a) Expand the ongoing Namibian Damara Tern project to South Africa and Angola. - <i>Provide the AEWA Secretariat as well as the IWG coordinator with a project proposal/outline including budget estimate as soon as possible so that fundraising efforts can start.</i>	45,000 EUR (year 1) + 30,000 EUR (year 2) + 30,000 EUR (year 3) UK ODA fund/Dutch ODA fund...	Small-scale project has started in Namibia, but further resources are needed for the extension into the other breeding range states. This could be possibly be funded through the UK overseas development aid programme or the EU. Funding from NGO Netherlands for phase 1 of the project.
	ALL	2022-2025	BirdLife South Africa, DFFE	b) Identify core foraging areas of Benguela coastal seabirds during critical life history stages outside of the breeding season such as juvenile and non-breeding stages - <i>Provide the AEWA Secretariat as well as the IWG coordinator with a project proposal/outline including budget estimate as soon as possible so that fundraising efforts can start.</i>	30,000 EUR per year for 3 years	Tracking of non-breeding African Penguins has started in South Africa but further resources are needed to track other species, in other countries during other critical life history stages (e.g. non-breeding Cape Gannets and Cape Cormorants).
1.4.2. Relate core foraging areas back to fishing zones/activities/catch and effort levels to design MPAs. <i>(Medium)</i>	-	-	-	<i>[Linked to action 1.2.2. above and the ongoing establishment of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs). No additional action required at this time.]</i>	-	-

Bycatch

Objective 2: To reduce fisheries bycatch of Cape Gannets to levels that do not impact population demographics						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result: 2.1. Seabird mortalities in longline and trawl fisheries are minimised						
2.1.1. Ensure that the use of proven mitigation measures is incorporated in permit conditions of relevant fisheries and that this is complied with. <i>(Essential)</i>	ALL	By 2022	Albatross Task Force	a) Investigate seabird bycatch thresholds to be included in permits based on findings from population models	YES – some activities could be part of a larger project application to FAO.	Enforcement and compliance of bycatch mitigation measures is lacking in Namibia. Emerging fisheries must be assessed for bycatch risks.
	Namibia	By 2023	Albatross Task Force	b) Advocate for implementation of bycatch mitigation regulations in pelagic long-line fisheries	UK ODA fund also potentially keen to follow-up with funds for seabirds/fisheries	ACAP coordinator: check sources for funding and possible links with ACAP activities. UK is also Party to ACAP.
	ALL		Albatross Task Force	c) Investigate potential alternatives to increase observer coverage (e.g. electronic monitoring)	ATF supported through RSPB etc. check to see whether funding will continue.	
	ALL	By 2022	BCC	d) Initiate expert review of National Plans of Action for mitigating bycatch in each country.		
	South Africa and Namibia			e) Quantify bycatch of Cape Gannets diving into trawl nets.	EU Marine Stewardship Council – for hake fisheries only	
	Angola			f) Quantify bycatch/directed catch of Cape Gannets in Angola by artisanal fisheries	Portuguese embassy or others	

Displacement and predation at colonies

Objective 3. To minimise displacement and predation at colonies						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result 3.1. Displacement of seabirds by seals is minimised						
3.1.1. Prevent seals from settling at sensitive sites. <i>(High)</i>	South Africa and Namibia	Ongoing	ZAF: DFFE NAM: MFMR	a) Dedicated government budget needed to implement both anti-displacement and predation activities including building capacity to carry out activities.	Government resources	Letter of recommendation from IWG to relevant governments to push for allocation of funds
3.1.2. Mitigate effects of existing displacements of seabirds by seals, e.g., by placing pipes for penguins to nest in and maintaining sea walls. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[Linked to action 3.1.1. above, no additional action required at this time]</i>		
Result 3.2. Predation of seabirds by seals, gulls, pelicans and terrestrial mammals is minimised						
3.2.1. Develop and implement protocols for the control of seals and Kelp Gulls involved in predation on seabirds. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[Linked to action 3.1.1. above, no additional action required at this time]</i>		
3.2.2. Remove/relocate existing predators at key existing seabird breeding sites and exclude terrestrial mammalian predators from proposed new sites <i>(Essential)</i>				<i>[Linked to action 3.1.1. above, no additional action required at this time]</i>		
3.2.3. Improve management of rubbish dumps and removal of seal carcasses to prevent Kelp Gulls and terrestrial mammalian predators approaching/colonising important breeding colonies of seabirds,				<i>[Linked to action 3.1.1. above, no additional action required at this time]</i>		

Objective 3. To minimise displacement and predation at colonies						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
especially Damara Terns. <i>(Medium)</i>						
3.2.4. Deter Great White Pelicans involved in predation on seabirds from key colonies. <i>(Medium)</i>				[Linked to action 3.1.1. above, no additional action required at this time]		

Human disturbance at colonies

Objective 4. To minimise disturbance to colonies by construction and recreational activities						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result 4.1. Adequate legal frameworks and administrative capacity in place to manage coastal and maritime developments without jeopardising seabird breeding habitat						
4.1.1. Strengthen environmental management legislation, especially fast-tracking environmental legislation in Namibia. <i>(High)</i>	Namibia	tbc		a) Strengthen the regulations for the Namibian Island Marine Protected Area (NIMPA) and revise regulations of the Environmental Management Act.	n/a	ADD Cooperation between ministries is lacking in Namibia – need to get relevant authorities together to discuss/be briefed. NGO workshop will need funding.
	South Africa	By 2025	BirdLife South Africa	b) Expand biodiversity screening tool for marine environment.	n/a	
4.1.2. Strengthen implementation of the environmental legislation. <i>(High)</i>	South Africa	2021	BirdLife South Africa	a) Create a regional NGO EIA forum for collaboration on development applications.	Additional capacity could be useful?	EIA process does not adequately take seabirds into consideration or does not reach all concerned stakeholders.
Result 4.2. Human disturbance of coastal seabirds is reduced and controlled						
4.2.1. Improve awareness, crime prevention and law enforcement. <i>(High)</i>	South Africa	tbc	tbc	a) Place signs near seabird colonies to increase awareness of conservation concerns, in particular minimizing disturbance within and around the colonies.	Yes – local bird clubs could be an option. Prioritise specific areas	
4.2.2. Improvement of maintenance of access						

Objective 4. To minimise disturbance to colonies by construction and recreational activities						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
management structures (e.g. fences). <i>(High)</i>						
Reduce noise pollution (due to vessel traffic including bunkering, seismic survey, harbour expansion development, drilling for diamonds etc.)				[See 'Emerging threats' section]	Yes – see 'Emerging threats' section	

Pollution

Objective 5. To reduce the number of seabird deaths due to pollution (i.e. oil and other hazardous and noxious substances)						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result 5.1. The number of oil spills is reduced						
5.1.1. All countries to ensure that there is a legislative framework to ensure that vessels are sea-worthy, have oil/effluent (or emergency/disaster) spill response plans and that they take responsibility to comply with relevant international laws and treaties governing seagoing vessels. Mechanisms should also be in place to prevent decision-making deadlocks and delays in implementation of legislation. <i>(Essential)</i>				Angola – clarify the situation and the current needs!	possibly	
				[No action required at this time]		

Objective 5. To reduce the number of seabird deaths due to pollution (i.e. oil and other hazardous and noxious substances)						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
5.1.2. Draw up an MOU between Angola, Namibia and South Africa to assist with capacity and resources in oil/pollution response. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		Although no formal MOU is in place, regional oil-spill cooperation is in place and this is expected to continue
5.1.3. Investigate means to develop a fund that shipping/oil companies contribute to, which would be used to support rehabilitation efforts, especially important in incidents when the responsible party cannot be identified. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC) Protocol indicated that all sea-going vessel must have insurance. In South Africa, the Merchant Shipping (Civil Liability Act) enacted CLC into SA law. Therefore, during an oil spill incident, any oiled wildlife response claims can be made against this insurance (Protection and Indemnity Club). Another fund is the Fund 92 which aims to compensate victims of oil spill damages beyond the ship owner's liability set out in the CLC Convention. This was enacted into SA's law. https://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-on-the-Establishment-of-an-International-Fund-for-Compensation-for-Oil-Pollution-Damage-(FUND).aspx
5.1.4. Ensure all oil, mining and other industries involved in resource extraction have oil/effluent (or emergency/disaster) spill response plans and capacity to carry them out; Reconsider legislation regarding EIAs for prospecting activities, ensuring that EIAs are required for all prospecting activities. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		Companies involved do have response plans. Recommend that ship-to-ship bunkering requires an EIA, watching brief to advocate for this when EIA regulations are reviewed
5.1.5. Implement environmental surveillance to				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		

Objective 5. To reduce the number of seabird deaths due to pollution (i.e. oil and other hazardous and noxious substances)						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
identify oil spills and subsequently identify and track vessels at sea which may release pollutants. <i>(Medium)</i>						
5.1.6. Explore designating sites as sensitive marine areas under International Maritime Organisation and consequent rerouting of shipping. <i>(Essential)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		Previous discussions about changing shipping lanes indicated this was unpalatable for shipping companies. There is a need to account for increased shipping traffic due to bunkering – explore adaptive management. Lessons to be learned from the US and South America
Result 5.2. Countries are adequately prepared for oil spills						
5.2.1. Develop and maintain national, and where relevant, regional Oil (and other Hazardous and Noxious Substances) Spill Contingency Plans. <i>(Essential)</i>	Namibia	tbc	tbc	a) Complete the Oiled Wildlife Response plan in Namibia	n/a	
5.2.2. Develop and regularly update individual seabird colony oil spill contingency plans (in line with the relevant National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan). These plans are to include shoreline clean-up strategies for the islands. <i>(Essential)</i>	Namibia	tbc	tbc	a) Ensure that Namibian Oiled Wildlife Response plan includes individual colony plans	n/a	

Objective 5. To reduce the number of seabird deaths due to pollution (i.e. oil and other hazardous and noxious substances)						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
5.2.3. Conduct training in order to familiarise stakeholders with updated oil spill contingency plans and mitigation and response techniques. <i>(Essential)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		Training has taken place and will continue under other existing structures, look for opportunities to engage in further capacity-building. If prioritised by BCC parties, BCC can support activities
Result 5.3. Responses to oil spills are adequate and appropriate						
5.3.1. Effective monitoring for oil pollution through aerial flights. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		Surveillance is undertaken on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis when spills are detected
5.3.2. Implement response as per contingency plans. <i>(Essential)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		
5.3.3. Each country to ensure that there is a means to effectively rehabilitate seabirds. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		South Africa has a network of effective rehabilitation centres. Namibia is developing their capacity.
5.3.4. Develop techniques for rescue and rehabilitation of cormorants. <i>(High)</i>	South Africa		SANCCOB	a) Improve techniques for the rehabilitation of Bank Cormorants and Cape Cormorants in particular to avoid habituation	BLSA to inquire with relevant people running efforts on what needs to be done in terms of research	This could be a small-scale cooperation project with a rehabilitation team in another region specialising in cormorant rehabilitation.

Result 5.4. Effects of oiling are monitored						
5.4.1. Determine the number of birds impacted in oiling events and the success of implemented response measures. <i>(Essential)</i>				<i>[No action required at this time]</i>		Birds are monitored after oiling events by colony managing authorities and other research institutions.

Sea level rise

Objective 6. To minimise impact of sea-level rise on population sizes						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result 6.1. Effects of climate change are mitigated at the most important and vulnerable seabird colonies						
6.1.1. Create a sea level rise working group with representatives from each country to conduct a risk assessment that will prioritise vulnerable colonies and investigate different technical solutions/mitigation measures (e.g. sea wall, platforms, artificial islands, coastal barriers). <i>(High)</i>	ALL	2024	tbc	a) Conduct a risk assessment of climate change impacts on seabirds	Apply for funding from the International Climate Initiative (IKI), Germany Coordinator capacity needed	This should be part of a larger project relating to climate change.
	South Africa	2022	BirdLife South Africa	b) Perform a feasibility study on creating new colonies using artificial islands within new and altered forage fish distributions areas.		https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/about-iki Support needed from IKI expert for project development
6.1.2. Implement appropriate mitigation measures at priority sites. <i>(High)</i>				<i>[This should form part of a larger project related to action 6.1.1]</i>		
6.1.3. Restore/improve breeding habitat on islands/sites where higher altitude space is available but habitat unsuitable (e.g. provision of nest boxes). <i>(Medium)</i>				<i>[This should form part of a larger project related to action 6.1.1]</i>		

Knowledge gaps

Objective 7. To fill key knowledge gaps on the impacts of threats, especially those relating to mining impacts and gillnet mortalities						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result 7.1 The impacts of mining and oil and gas exploration as well as seismic activities on seabirds in the region are identified						
7.1.1. Research and monitoring programmes underway. <i>(High)</i>	ALL	2023	tbc	a) Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment throughout the region which should consider the cumulative impacts of these activities that are already occurring or anticipated to occur in key areas for seabirds.	Yes Private partnership donors Dutch Official Development Assistance International Maritime Organization	This should also include activities in the 'Emerging threats' section offshore windfarms EIA requirements need to remain in place. The SEA does not replace this.
7.1.2. Seabirds are considered in all EIAs that cover these activities. <i>(High)</i>				[Linked to action 4.1.2]		The environmental regulations in South Africa and Namibia require that seabirds are taken into account but in practice, all the issues facing seabirds may not be adequately covered and not all stakeholders receive communication about developments.
Result 7.2. Levels of directed take of Cape Gannets are quantified						
7.2.1. Determine the degree of directed take of Cape Gannets in AGO by artisanal fishers. <i>(Medium)</i>				[Included in action 2.1.1]		
Result 7.3. Cormorant mortalities in gillnets, lobster pots and other fishing gear are quantified						
7.3.1. Investigate the scale of the problem in AGO, NAM and ZAF. <i>(Medium)</i>	ALL	2025	BirdLife South Africa	a) Conduct a scoping study to quantify seabird bycatch in gillnets.	Yes	Concern that there may be some missing some sources of mortality (not just for cormorants)

Emerging issues

Objective 8. To address key threats that have emerged or have rapidly increased since the initial drafting of the Action Plan						
Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
Result 8.1 Plastics – entanglement and fishing gear (ingestion low risks)						
8.1.1. The BCC and Parties to it are informed of the potential threat of discarded fishing gear and of plastics to seabirds in the region and are requested to make baseline assessments of the risk and to mitigate it where necessary	ALL			Increase public awareness and education about the threat plastic imposes to seabirds (e.g. entanglement and ingestion) and limiting the use of single use plastics.		
Result 8.2 Countries are adequately prepared for disease outbreaks						
8.2.1. Ensure that monitoring of diseases occurs, and protocols are in place once a disease outbreak is detected.	ALL	tbc	tbc	a) Develop standard protocols on handling mass disease outbreaks and preventing further spread.		In South Africa protocol needs to be reviewed and updated. AEWA has contacts who could assist with these tasks.
Result 8.3 The impacts of activities associated with the expansion of maritime industries are identified and where possible mitigated.						
8.3.1 Investigate the potential impact of expanding maritime activities including (but not limited to): offshore windfarms, mining, ship-to-ship bunkering, aquaculture, vessel traffic (noise pollution and oil spill risk), seismic activities, power-generating ships (noise pollution);	ALL	tbc	tbc	a) Conduct risk assessments/literature reviews of the impacts of potential threats and the mechanism(s) by which they impact seabirds.	YES	This should also link to the Strategic Environmental Assessment in action 7.1.1. One project ongoing on vessel traffic noise on African Penguins, but much more work needed to understand impacts on other seabird species in different regions.
				b) National and international legal frameworks reviewed in terms of effectiveness in triggering appropriate environmental assessments for these activities. Problematic activities (bunkering etc.) should be included in appropriate risk assessment processes		There is the opportunity to add relevant information into the marine spatial planning process in SA especially with the recent gazetting of the Marine Spatial Planning Act.

Objective 8. To address key threats that have emerged or have rapidly increased since the initial drafting of the Action Plan

Action	Range states	Timeframe	Lead	Activities	Budget needed	Comments
				depending on the national legislation		
				c) Develop adaptive management protocols for the maritime management sector to mitigate threats		This could include adaptive shipping lane/anchorage management in response to condition indices of threatened species, e.g. African Penguins in Algoa Bay
8.3.2 Investigate the impact of aquaculture/fin-fish farming						Fin-fish cage farming where cages covered with nets could be a risk to Cape Gannets through diving into nets