



4th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
15 – 19 September 2008, Antananarivo, Madagascar

“Flyway Conservation at Work – Review of the Past, Vision for the Future”

DRAFT RESOLUTION 4.2

**RESPONDING TO THE NEED TO IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE
STATUS OF AND FACTORS CAUSING DECLINES OF SOME
WATERBIRD POPULATIONS**

Recalling that, for waterbird populations listed in Table 1, Paragraphs 5.1-5.4 of AEWA’s Action Plan require Contracting Parties *inter alia* to endeavour to monitor their sizes and trends, carry out survey work in poorly known areas, publish and/or send results of these activities to appropriate international organisations, and cooperate to enable reviews of population status and trends as well as to determine migration routes;

Welcoming the considerable improvement in knowledge concerning waterbird population sizes and trends presented in the fourth edition of the Report on the Conservation Status of Migratory Waterbirds in the Agreement Area (document AEWA/MOP 4.8);

Noting however, that population estimates are missing for 2% of the waterbird populations covered by the Agreement, that the quality of many of the available population estimates or trends still remains low because of lack of data, and that trend data are missing for 29% of these;

Further noting that only a few waterbird taxa have undergone recent assessment of the limits of their populations;

Acknowledging the work of the Technical Committee over the past triennium on prioritisation of taxa which would benefit from an early review of the limits of their populations;

Concerned that the trend status of waterbirds in the Agreement area has worsened between 1999 – when the Agreement came into force – and 2008, with twice as many populations (41%) showing decreasing rather than increasing trends (21%);

Further noting that relatively high proportions of waterbird populations have centres of breeding distribution in the Arctic and Boreal regions of Russia, Norway, Iceland, Greenland and Canada, steppe zones of Central Asia, and wetlands of sub-Saharan Africa, and that filling such knowledge gaps cannot be achieved without active collaboration with Range States, which are not currently Contracting Parties to the Agreement;

Further recalling the AEWA Action Plan Paragraphs 5.5-5.7, whereby the Parties shall endeavour to initiate and support joint research projects into the ecology and population dynamics and migration patterns of these waterbird populations and their habitats, undertake studies on the effects of wetland loss and degradation, and disturbance, on the carrying capacity of wetlands, and undertake studies on the impact of hunting and trade on the populations;

Further recalling Article III.2a of the Agreement, which states that “*the Parties shall: ensure that any use of migratory waterbirds ... is sustainable for the species as well as for the ecological systems that support them*”;

Conscious that some of the identified gaps in flyway delineations or available population count data might be caused by shortage of expertise, financial or logistical support in some parts of the Agreement area;

Acknowledging the contribution of the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) Project/African-Eurasian Flyways GEF Project towards filling gaps in knowledge on the sizes and distribution of populations of waterbirds.

The Meeting of the Parties:

1. *Urges* Contracting Parties and other Range States, which monitor waterbird numbers at key sites, but which have not yet submitted those data to Wetlands International’s International Waterbird Census (IWC) databases (for wintering waterbirds) or World Bird Databases of BirdLife International (for breeding waterbirds), to provide those data as soon as possible;
2. *Urges* Contracting Parties and other Range States, which do not comprehensively monitor waterbirds at key sites for waterbirds to initiate monitoring programmes involving regular visits to the sites, and to subsequently submit compiled data on bird numbers to the international databases mentioned above;
3. *Strongly Encourages* Contracting Parties and other Range States to consider whether suitable wetlands are to be found in poorly known parts of their country, to initiate survey work in such areas, and if new key sites are identified during such surveys, to include these in future monitoring programmes, subsequently submitting relevant data international databases;
4. *Encourages* Contracting Parties and other Range States to develop comprehensive monitoring of waterbirds at key sites used at other stages of the annual cycle (migratory staging and moulting periods), and to submit these data to the IWC;
5. *Encourages* Contracting Parties and other Range States to monitor waterbirds which are poorly covered by the standard censuses (cryptic species, nocturnal species, colonially nesting species and species with dispersed distributions) in close co-operation with relevant IUCN/Wetlands International’s species Specialist Groups, and relevant conservation and hunting organisations;
6. *Calls* upon Contracting Parties and other Range States to support the establishment of schemes for monitoring productivity and mortality, natural as well as that caused by hunting (if any), of a wide selection of species, in particular declining species, in close collaboration with the relevant species Specialist Groups of IUCN/Wetlands International, and hunting and ringing organisations;
7. *Encourages* Contracting Parties and other Range States to increase support for appropriate marking and telemetry studies to improve the understanding of movements of waterbirds, and especially of species with poorly known migratory movements;
8. *Requests* Wetlands International and its waterbird Specialist Groups, in consultation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission, in their support to the Agreement, resources permitting, to continue to assess the limits of biogeographical populations of migratory waterbirds, based on genetic analysis, ringing and other marking methods, and focusing on waterbird taxa considered likely to benefit from an early review of the limits of their populations, in order of priority as recommended by the Technical Committee at its eight meeting: (Penguins)¹, (Gannets), (Flamingos), (Cranes), (Divers), (Cormorants), (Pelicans), (Heron & egrets), (Gulls), (Geese), (Terns & skimmers), (Grebes), (Flufftails), (Ibises), (storks & spoonbills), (Rails), (Swans), (Waders), (Snipes & woodcock), (Ducks);

¹ Taxa in brackets comprise a limited number of species (from one to three species).

9. *Calls* upon Contracting Parties and donor organisations to help provide necessary financial means, currently estimated at around €700,000², to facilitate this task;

10. *Requests* the Secretariat, resources permitting, to commission a review of available scientific evidence for the causes of population changes in waterbird populations and identify priority areas for further research to improve our understanding of factors causing population changes; and

11. *Calls* upon Contracting Parties with well developed programmes of waterbird monitoring and research, to share their experience, and, resources permitting, provide financial support for capacity building in relation to waterbird monitoring in Contracting Parties and other Range States where programmes are more poorly developed.

² Excluding Ducks, Geese, Swans, Waders, Snipes and Woodcock for which there are atlases published or in preparation.